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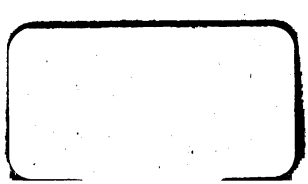

MEMOIRS

OF

THE LIFE

OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

GEORGE CANNING.

"First, he was desirous to have the rule and principality in his own hands; ..... Lastly, he endeavoured to do such actions as might continue his memory, and leave an impression of his good government to after ages."

BACON.

"What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!"

BURKE.

SECOND EDITION.

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MEMOIRS

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RIGHT HON. GEORGE CANNING.

CHAPTER V.

From the Death of Mr. Pitt to the Dismission of the Grenville Administration—Mr. Canning's Satires—Elijah's Mantle—Blue and Buff—His Speeches in Parliament against the Measures of Administration—The Death of Mr. Fox—Change of Ministry—Cause of that Change—Constitutional Doctrines—Lampoons on the late Ministers—All the Talents—The New Old Opposition.

WHETHER catholic emancipation was ever seriously contemplated by Mr. Pitt may well be doubted. His retirement from office, as we have seen, was a temporary expedient, to avoid the fulfilment of his engagement with the catholics of Ireland; and from that time to the period of his death, he abandoned the measure, in the accomplishment of which, his solemn faith and the faith of the nation through him had been pledged. Had he been sincere, and had he

really considered catholic emancipation to be founded in policy and justice, would he have accepted office in 1804, to the exclusion of the Grenville party, with whom he had acted with so much cordiality during his former administration, and with whom this question was one of vital importance? It is said, indeed, that in forming the ministry, his own views were sacrificed to the narrow prejudices that existed in a high quarter; that but for these prejudices, an administration would have been formed, embracing the most splendid talents and the most powerful influence in the empire. It was even asserted, that Mr. Pitt had introduced the name of Mr. Fox to his sovereign, at the suggestion of Lord Grenville, who made his admission to office the *sine qua non* of his own acceptance of power. This, however, it seems, was not a *sine qua non* with Mr. Pitt. He left the Grenvilles and catholic emancipation to shift for themselves, while he summoned to his assistance the Castlereaghs and the Percevals, who scrupulously adhered to his new policy *. On the death of its

* Of the insincerity of the premier in the principal article of negociation with the Irish catholics, namely, their emancipation on condition of their accepting the union, we have additional evidence in the admissions of the Antijacobin; the paper from whence the following extract, confirmatory of this suspicion is taken, it is said, was written by Mr. Canning.

"In the mean time, it is sufficient for us to know, and we state the fact with confidence (in order to remove some very false impressions which have been made on the public mind by a mis-statement) that the king never gave his cabinet ministers the smallest reason to believe that the measures in question would have his sanction and support; on the contrary, nearly three years ago, his majesty declared his firm resolution never

leader the administration was dissolved; they retired to make way for a class of politicians, most of whom were directly opposed to them in nearly all the great questions which it was the business of parliament to

to give his consent to certain acts, which consent, his sense and his conscience told him, would involve a violation of his coronation oath. To this must be imputed the memorable recall of Earl Fitzwilliam, and to this must be ascribed his firmness in rejecting the propositions, resisting the persuasions of his late ministers. It is, indeed, to us a matter of extreme surprise, that under such circumstances, those ministers should have ventured to give a pledge in the first instance; and afterwards, for the purpose of redeeming it, to introduce the subject of it into his majesty's speech. The reception which such a proposition experienced was such as surely they had good reason to expect." Here it is admitted, that Ireland was cajoled into the union; that the ministers knew, prior to the negociation, the king's determination never to yield the point which they had conceded. Ought men, thus committed to a whole people, to have abandoned their pledge on any ground? Constitutionally, ought they to have stopped short till they had presented to the monarch their decision for his acceptance or refusal; and, in the case of the latter, would it not have been incumbent upon them to retire from office, and never to accept it again but on the express condition of keeping their faith, and retrieving their forfeited honour? But the union with Ireland was a measure of profoundest policy, and essential to the prosperity of both countries. But are men to do evil that good may come? "*Fiat justitia, ruat cœlum.*" The thing was done, but the conditions were not fulfilled—what followed? discontent, violent cabals, and finally, rebellion; and after the lapse of six and twenty years, how has the union benefited Ireland? We are not arguing for or against emancipation; we are only contending for good faith between contracting parties. It is a curious speculation, and might be reasoned upon in the abstract, in a constitution like that of Great Britain, having three estates of the realm, how far that estate, which consists of an individual,

discuss and determine. To Lord Grenville his majesty assigned the delicate task of arranging the new administration. The names of the new ministers soon appeared in the gazette; those in the cabinet consisted of Lords Grenville, Erskine, Fitzwilliam, Spencer, Moira, Sidmouth, and *Ellenborough*; Lord Henry Petty, Mr. Fox, Mr. Wyndham, and Mr. Grey.

Lord Grenville succeeded Mr. Pitt as first lord of the treasury, and Lord Henry Petty (now the Marquis of Lansdown) as chancellor of the exchequer. Earl Fitzwilliam was appointed president of the council in the room of Lord Camden, and Viscount Sidmouth (late Mr. Addington) succeeded the Earl of Westmoreland as lord of the privy seal. Mr. Fox became secretary of the foreign office, vacated by the retirement of Lord Mulgrave. General Fitzpatrick succeeded Mr. William Dundas as secretary of war; and Mr. Wyndham Lord Castlereagh in the department of war and the colonies. In the home department, Lord Hawkesbury gave place to Earl Spencer. Mr. Erskine was made a baron by the title of Lord Erskine, and succeeded Lord Eldon as lord high chancellor of England. Mr. Grey succeeded Lord Barham as first lord of the admiralty. Lord Moira became master of the ordnance. Mr. Sheridan succeeded Mr. Canning as treasurer of the navy; the

can be justified in predetermining great questions of policy before they are discussed by the other two, and resolving, when they are discussed and proposed, to reject them from personal considerations, when it is constitutionally placed above all personal responsibility. We hope this country will never witness the practical illustration of this political abstraction, thrown out only for the reflection of the curious.

Duke of Bedford Lord Hardwicke in the government of Ireland. Earl St. Vincent was appointed to the command of the Channel fleet; and Lords Minto and Aukland presided, one over the board of control, the other over the board of trade. This is the administration on which has been lavished so much unmerited abuse. Thrown by their predecessors into circumstances of unparalleled difficulty, some of them labouring under the personal antipathy of the sovereign; their system of politics hated by a tory aristocracy, and exposed to the clamour of the people, because they could not work miracles, and bring, in spite of innumerable obstacles, their system into immediate operation; coldly supported by their friends and virulently assailed by their enemies, they were not destined long to survive the dissolution of their illustrious head; whose health, when he entered upon office, was visibly declining, and who literally fell a victim to the corroding cares which preyed upon his heart,—the malevolence which fastened upon him its viper fangs,—and the vexatious disappointments which, for want of support from the throne and from the country, his enlightened measures were doomed to encounter.

When it was certainly known that "the conscience of the king" on a great political question was to be the authority of the state, and that every administration must bow to this or retire, the partizans of Mr. Pitt strangely enough, if he was ever the friend of emancipation, set up the cry of "no popery," to harass his successors in office: their unworthy efforts were too successful, and all the "talents," as they were truly denominated, though in derision by their enemies, were not able to stand against the popular

Sage Palinurus of the realm!
By Vincent call'd to take the helm,
And play his proxy's part;
Dost thou or star or compass know?
Canst reef aloft—or hand below?
Hast conn'd the shipman's chart?

No!—From Pitt's Mantle tear a rag,
Enough to serve thee for a flag,
And hoist it on thy mast:
Beneath that sign (our prosperous star)
Shall future Nelsons rush to war,
And rival, victories past.

Sidmouth—though low his head is laid,
Who call'd thee from thy native shade,
And gave thee second birth;
Gave thee the sweets of Power and Place,
The tufted gown, the gilded mace,
And rear'd thy puny worth?

Think how his Mantle wrapp'd thee round:
Is one of equal virtue found
Among thy new compeers?
Or can thy cloak of Amiens' stuff,
Once laugh'd to scorn by Blue and Buff,
Screen thee from Wyndham's jeers?

When Faction threaten'd Britain's land,
Thy new-made friends—a desperate band,
Like Ahab—stood reproved:
Pitt's powerful tongue their rage could check;
His counsel saved, 'midst general wreck,
The Israel that he loved.

Yes, honour'd shade! whilst near thy grave
The letter'd sage, and chieftain brave,
The votive marble claim;
O'er thy cold corse, the public tear
Congeal'd, a crystal shrine shall rear,
Unsullied as thy fame!

BLUE AND BUFF.

Come, sportive Muse, with plume satiric,
Describe each lawless, bold empiric,
Who, with the Blue and Buffs' sad crew,
Now stripped in *buff*, shall look so *blue*.

First paint L—d H—w—k, boisterous, rough,
Dealer in wholesale quack'ry stuff,
Who far beyond famed *Katterfelt*,
Prescribed what ne'er was seen or felt;
Left Law and Reason in the lurch,
To mould the Senate, twist the Church:
But wand'ring once from Downing-street,
Great Buckingham's old dome to greet,
With grand Catholiconian pill,
Was lost—on *Constitution*-hill.

Next W—dh—m, metaphysic elf,
Who all things knows—except himself;
Three tedious hours who raves and talks
Of all that in his cranium stalks;
Whose *regular* ideas fear
Militia much, more Volunteer,
A wild inapplicable genius,
Scarce versed in policy's *quæ genus;*
In syntax yet more scantly read,
Without one concord in his head.

Now, Muse, direct the shaft of wit,
Where little P—tty apes great Pitt:
This year in woe-begone oration,
To Britons paints a bankrupt nation:
Resources all dilapidate,
Taxation at extremest fate;
Whilst next this *little, great, small* man,
Heigh! presto! pass! by one bold plan,
Restores you all to peace and plenty;
The deuce is in 't! won't this content ye?

With necromantic rod of Moses
(A twig cut from a bush of roses),
To ease at once your every fear,
Turns bear to bull, and bull to bear.

Nor miss, dear Muse, to gild my tale,
The gallant E—rl of L—d—e,
Who late to Paris post was sent, to
Become the dupe of Benevento;
Hush'd to soft sleep like "Baby Bunting,"
While *Nap the Great* went out "a-hunting."
Or was it, say, thou bonny chiel,
Thy ardent love for Britain's weal,
That led thy steps a peep to take
At thy great territorial * stake;
The purchase of thine *assignats*,
Thy Corso-Gallican *contrats*;
At once th' opprobrium and solution,
Of all thy love for revolution?

The Muse recoils, as something shock'd her,
To charge with harm the harmless D—ct—r;
When, *una voce*, all allow,
He would do right—if he knew how.

But if, amongst this motley crew,
One man of real parts we view,
With mind for highest station fit,
The colleague, friend, yet foe of Pitt;
He, to whose merits all men granted,
That Pitt's last list one great name wanted;
He, who with every talent shone,
Except consistency alone;
"*We smile, if such a man there be;*
But *weep*, if GRENVILLE should be he."

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* It is desired that this may not be *mistaken* for a sapling from the *constitutional hedge*, as it is evident, that both the fence, and the land it encloses, must have been quite out of sight when the Noble Lord made his purchase.

The measures of the government during its short reign were certainly far from popular. The cry, we may add, the yell, was raised against them, both in and out of doors. Mr. Canning assailed them with peculiar bitterness. His speeches, however, in general, possess little interest, and are not remarkable for ability, except when he had, or could make an opportunity to indulge his wit at the expense of his former friends, who, being constituent parts of the administration he reviled, came in for their full share of vituperative hostility. The first debate of any consequence which excited the attention of the country was Lord Ellenborough's seat in the cabinet, a station utterly at variance with his official character as lord chief justice, and as unconstitutional as it was nearly unprecedented: thus argued the opposition, and it must be confessed that they had the best of the argument. Mr. Canning's speech on this occasion discovered his enlarged views of the principles of the British constitution, and his natural superiority to the narrow range of politics to which he was generally confined. In reply to Mr. Bond, who had ably defended this measure of the minister, Mr. Canning said,

"That before he proceeded to state shortly the grounds on which he was about to support the motion which had been made by his hon. friend, he wished to say a few words, with a view to disclaim the motives which seemed to be attributed to him and those who thought with him, by the right hon. gentleman who spoke last. That right hon. gentleman had said, that at a moment when the union of all the talents that could possibly be collected was so necessary to meet the dangers and difficulties by which the country was at this moment so peculiarly weighed down, he and his friends were attempting to drive from his majesty's councils a person of the most eminent

talents, acknowledged virtues, manly judgment, and unquestionable integrity, which he had described. He, for one, protested against this most unfair mode of arguing. When a question of this nature was brought forward, if he had his wish, allusions to personal character would form no part of the subject. If the question was at all worthy of attention, and that it was, the right hon. gentleman himself admitted, when he told us that this affair had made a deep impression on the country, and that the grounds on which it was supported appeared at first view extremely plausible, if it was at all worthy of attention, then it was fitting that it should be discussed on its own merits, as relating to a chief justice, and not as referring to any particular individual. It was therefore, he contended, unfair in the right hon. gentleman to impute any motive whatever to them that pointed at the character of Lord Ellenborough, when they in fact argued not from the unfitness of that noble and learned lord in particular to fill a situation in the cabinet, but from the unfitness of the place for any person who held the office of lord chief justice. If the high talents and integrity of Lord Ellenborough were deemed so essential in the cabinet—and to every thing that could be said in his praise he was perfectly willing to subscribe—then there was an obvious mode of availing themselves of those talents and that integrity, by advancing the noble and learned lord one step higher, and putting into his hands the great seal; and, after the panegyrics which had been lavished on the independence of the noble and learned lord, he could not believe that he had refused to accept this promotion, from the consideration that it was better to retain a place for life than accept the precarious office of lord high chancellor. But, not contented with asserting that a judge might with propriety sit in the cabinet, the right hon. gentleman also maintained, that his very independence rendered him one of the fittest persons in the world for such a situation, because he could give his opinions unwarped and unbiassed by any consideration of self-interest. He viewed the matter, however, in a very different light from that in which it was regarded by the right hon. gentleman. He considered it in that point of view in which it had been represented by his hon. friend near him, who had not been answered on this head. He thought that the

holding a situation which was in its nature precarious, and yet an object of ambition, had a tendency to destroy the confidence which resulted from the independence of the judge. He trusted he could not be here misunderstood, so far as to be thought to allude to any particular individual. He only viewed the point in the abstract, and contended, that when you placed, in the situation above referred to, a person who by law had been jealously made independent, you did in a great measure do away the effects of that independence. This would be evident, if once it was admitted, and it could not be denied, that the removal of a lord chief justice from a place which was an object of ambition would be attended with some degree of discredit to him, for, to avoid this discredit, there would at least, on some occasions, be a temptation for him to act in a manner not altogether consistent with his duty and character. That it was an object of ambition to hold a place in the cabinet, he thought could not be denied. The thing had of late been abundantly proved; for it was impossible to converse in the street, or read the newspapers during the last six weeks, without knowing how eagerly such places were sought after. In four instances it had been lately proved that cabinet places were considered as objects of ambition, in addition to other efficient situations. He therefore, he supposed, might take it for granted, that a place in the cabinet was an object of ambition; and when this was admitted, the matter of salaries and emoluments made very little difference in the present question. The right hon. gentleman agreed in the panegyrics that had been pronounced on the administration of justice in this country. It was one of the greatest blessings, if not the very greatest, of our constitution. It was no less firm than it was valuable. It had withstood the shock of parties, of usurpation, and of rebellion. To what cause were we to attribute this? Not to any particular statute by which the distinction between the judicial and the executive powers had been established, but from the universal feeling and sentiment that such a distinction ought to exist, and that with the exception of a very few instances it had existed. But if the administration of justice in the country was thus admirable, it was the most important of all duties, and would afford ample employment for all the talents, virtues, integrity, and every

other excellent qualification, which had been justly ascribed to the noble and learned lord who at present occupied the situation of lord chief justice. What he objected to was this, that instead of confining the attention of any lord chief justice to the discharge of his duty in that capacity, which would afford him full and ample employment, you were starting other objects of ambition to which his views might be directed. He would indeed still pursue the objects which were more intimately connected with his profession; but instead of building his fame on the strict and honourable administration of justice, he might be aspiring after other objects of ambition. A most serious evil was thus introduced, which would be done away by the passing of these motions; or, if that could not be hoped for, he would at least indulge the expectation, that it would be remedied by the mature and unbiassed reflection of those persons who now formed his majesty's administration.—There was one very great fault and error into which the right hon. gentleman had fallen, for his argument seemed to imply, that independence was not so absolutely necessary in a judge as had been imagined; but then he said, that there was always a remedy in case of error. But the point was, to guard, if possible, against all chance of error from any bias of the judge in the first instance. The right hon. gentleman's argument went to this extent: suppose the case of a libel; he said, that the matter did not so much rest with the judge as with the jury, and after all a new trial might be granted. But, was that the way in which the right hon. gentleman thought a great constitutional question ought to be treated? Was that the way in which a measure ought to be discussed, which, by his own admission, had made so great an impression on the feelings of the country? But then he said, that in the agitation of particular questions in the cabinet, the noble and learned lord might, if it was thought expedient, avoid attending. This might undoubtedly be the case; but was this the sort of security which ought to be enjoyed in this free country? The right hon. gentleman had found fault with these motions, because they were so moderate, and spoke the simple truth, and nothing but the truth. It was well known there was no positive law existing at present which opposed this measure, and therefore it could not properly perhaps be called illegal, and it might not

be correct to call it unconstitutional till the point was clearly established. But what he said was, that it was extremely inconvenient, and contrary to the principles of reason and common sense, that the judicial and executive powers should be combined in the same person. As to the point of suspicion, it was certain that no man was obliged to remove from a situation where he was useful, merely because others chose to suspect him without reason. But if, however, an alarm was by this means occasioned relative to a matter of such great importance as the present, and if it was not necessary or very expedient that the cause of such alarm, however unfounded, should exist, he thought it was proper that it should become a legislative object, and that every occasion of suspicion should be done away. He was surprised to hear from the right hon. gentleman, who was a lawyer, that it was a matter of no great consequence that suspicions should exist respecting the independence of a judge. There would always, in such a case, be doubts respecting the justice of his decisions; therefore, though there might be a remedy, it was better that there should be in the first instance no cause even for suspicion of a bias. But the right hon. gentleman complained not only of the terms of the motions, but said that they did not go far enough in practice; for, in order to be effectual they ought to go so far as to deprive a lord chief justice not only of a place in the cabinet, but also of his place in the privy council, and of his peerage. He would not, however, enter particularly on this point. But with regard to the cabinet, the right hon. gentleman said, that it was not recognized by the constitution, and that, in fact, it was nothing else than a select committee of the privy council, called at the discretion of his majesty. He never heard a more untenable proposition. In a free country such as this, where a control was necessary, and where responsibility must necessarily lodge somewhere, were we at this day to be turned round by being told that there was no such thing in the constitution as a cabinet? We had persons who advised with his majesty, who performed all the functions of government, who were known all over the country to be so, who were known as the cabinet all over London, and even in the lobby; but, the moment we entered this door, then we were told that there was no cabinet! It might be true, indeed, that

the constitution recognized nothing under the name of the cabinet, but it was not the less certain that there was such an assembly with whom the responsibility for whatever advice they gave his majesty rested.—Now, as to the question of responsibility; the right hon. gentleman allowed, that every individual who joined the council in advising his majesty was responsible for the whole. Lord Ellenborough then might be responsible for the whole, and if this was the case, he would beg of gentlemen to consider, whether on the principles of reason and common sense, or those laid down by the best authorities, whether a judge ought to be placed in a situation where it would be utterly impossible for him to divest himself entirely of the feelings of party, and which would naturally render him liable to suspicion? Now, with respect to the class of examples mentioned by the right hon. gentleman, there was a great and evident distinction between them and the case under consideration. It was not by any means unfit that a judge should form part of a council, which was to preserve the rights of sovereigns, but where no party politics prevailed. But here, in fact, the judge was under the control of the executive government, and instantly became a party politician; and, if ever there could be cases, where he should doubt whether it was proper that judges should occupy places as regents or governors, it would be in cases where these judges had in the first place been cabinet ministers. The case of Lord Hardwicke he understood to be given up [no, no, from the other side]. He certainly had heard nothing positively asserted on that head. But the truth was, that he, after accepting the office of the chancellor, had held his former situation for a short time, merely till a successor could be appointed. Why, he would give them another instance of this kind: Lord Eldon had, for two months subsequent to his acceptance of the chancellorship, held his former office of chief justice of the common pleas, till his successor could be appointed. Why, then, they remained with the single example of Lord Mansfield. The right hon. gentleman had said, that Lord Mansfield had held both situations, and no notice had been taken of it by parliament, although the thing must have been notorious. Now, though positive evidence could not be had on this subject, yet he could bring circumstantial evidence

that the thing was not generally known. There were surmises about it, and as often as it was alluded to, it was marked with reprobation. Indeed, thirteen years afterwards, his having sat in the cabinet while lord chief justice was imputed to him as a charge by the father of a noble lord opposite to him (Lord H. Petty), and the question directly put to him, whether or not the thing was true. This was put in the most forcible terms, and Lord Mansfield admitted it, but said that he had, for some time, begged leave not to act as an efficient member. From this it appeared that the example was by no means notorious, and it was still more evident from the remark of Lord Shelburne, who said, 'that the noble lord had confessed that there was a time when he had infringed the principles of the constitution by acting as a cabinet minister and as lord chief justice at the same time.' This was the remark of Lord Shelburne, who continued by observing, 'that the excellence of the British constitution lay in keeping the executive and judicial powers as separate and distinct as possible;' and why? Not for the reason given by the right hon. gentleman, but 'that a person might not be under the necessity of advising in one capacity what he might be called upon to execute in another.' This example then fell to the ground. No one was more ready to acknowledge a high admiration of the talents of Lord Mansfield than he was, but he would ask any person who had read the history of these times, whether that noble and learned judge would not have done much more essential service to his country if he had not mixed the character of the politician with that of the judge? But you had the example of his maturer judgment against that of his earlier years; for by refusing to act as a cabinet minister after the year 1765, he in some measure tacitly condemned his former conduct. The only defence that could be offered for the admission of the chief justice into the cabinet would be necessity, or strong expediency: but neither had been proved. There was an attempt to prove the expediency: but as to the necessity, the proof had not even been attempted. But having failed in the way of example, the right hon. gentleman had recourse to analogy, and observed that the lord chancellor was a cabinet minister; and said, that he would not be answered here with the remark that the chancellor had nothing to do with criminal

causes. But he must be answered in this way, and the chancellor could be removed in two ways, either by the crown, which would not continue to employ a servant who might be disliked; or by an address of parliament, for malversation in office. But, suppose Lord Ellenborough should give the worst advice that could be conceived to his majesty; suppose he should advise him to trample on all laws, or throw them into the fire, what could be done? Could you remove him from his office of chief justice, in which he had committed no malversation? or could you address the throne to remove him from the cabinet? For his part, he could conceive no greater curse to a free country than an irremovable cabinet minister.—Now, these were the grounds on which he supported the motion. He allowed all the talents and virtues that had been ascribed to the noble and learned judge, and had no doubt that their application would be found of no little use in the cabinet, were it not that he held a situation utterly incompatible, in his ideas, with the proper discharge of its duties. He thought it therefore unwise in the greatest degree to place him in a situation which might bring suspicion on his judicial character. The example was supported by no analogy. No expediency was proved, and the proof of a necessity had not even been attempted. He valued highly the noble and learned lord's abilities; but he thought the administration of the municipal justice of the country a matter of such infinite importance, that he would not purchase all the services which for years his talents could render in the cabinet, for a suspicion of one hour attached to his character as a judge."—*Lord Ellenborough's Seat in the Cabinet, March* 3, 1806.

On the ordnance estimates, he thus characterizes the administration: "An administration combining, as had been asserted, and as they themselves represented, and which he was not disposed to deny, all the talents, all the abilities, and all the experience and wisdom of the country." Mr. Fox repelled this attack by a delicate and gentle irony, which might make the flesh tingle, but could never draw blood. The right honourable gentleman, he observed, had stated that

the present administration comprised all the talents in the country, and he had now stated it in such a manner as might lead to a supposition that they had so represented themselves. He should be happy that the right honourable gentleman would state on what occasion he had heard them so represent themselves. It was impossible that they could have said so, when they saw the right honourable gentleman on the other side of the house. It would be ridiculous in any person to insinuate that ministry comprised all the talent of the country, when the right honourable gentleman was out of office. Not only the right honourable gentleman, but his colleagues on the same bench with him, had made such a representation impossible, particularly by the display of talent which they had already made in opposition.

On the 29th of March, the minister brought forth his budget. Mr. Canning's speech on this occasion was angry, short, and unimportant. On the question of military opinions relating to the army, on the motion of Mr. Yorke that copies of all military opinions in writing, as may have been given, in consequence of a requisition from his majesty's government, on the subject of recruiting the army in future by enlisting for a term of years, be laid before the house, Mr. Canning, in reply to the chancellor of the exchequer, Lord Henry Petty, said:

"He could not frame to himself any valid objection to the present motion. All that was asked was, merely the possession of those means of information on which the hon. gentleman had founded his plan. Let the authorities and opinions be as numerous as was consistent with convenience, but let not the house be called on to decide before they have the means of forming a judgment. If it should appear that the opinions of

military men were nearly equally balanced on the subject, he should consider this as a sufficient reason for rejecting this new plan, and remaining as we were. It was dangerous to alter what was already well, and particularly by the adoption of a new project, the consequences of which it was impossible to foresee. It was amusing, he said, to compare the professions of ministers with their practice. The right hon. gentleman concluded by saying, that a story had been related by one of his majesty's ministers (lord H. Petty) on producing the budget, of an old Roman moralist, who had wished to build his house in such a style of architecture that every person might see into it. Like this man's house, the transactions of the present ministers were to be; but he was inclined to believe that the architecture of the house was not Roman, but Gothic; and that it was only remarkable for its huge windows excluding the light, and for its narrow passages that led to nothing."

This discussion took place on the 17th of April; and though Mr. Canning's name occurs in several other debates, yet he does not break forth in his characteristic splendour till the 30th, when, on the question for the repeal of the additional force bill, he delivered a first-rate admirable speech. The additional force bill was a favourite measure of Mr. Pitt. In the views of the present minister, it was inefficient and oppressive. Mr. Wyndham therefore moved for its repeal; and that part of Mr. Canning's reply which relates to the honourable secretary we shall introduce, because it is the best part of his speech, and possesses more general interest than the dry argument by which it is preceded, which, however important at the time, is of comparatively little moment now.

"The right hon. gentleman has told us, that we should find in his plan the application of all the principles which he has at different times stated to the house. I have already had occasion to consider this declaration in one point of view, as evincing the

degree of respect which the right hon. gentleman entertains for our former decisions. But it is not to be denied that he might have told us, with equal truth, that we should find in his plan the contradiction of all the principles which he has at different times stated; a recommendation which the house would have been bound to receive with more complacency than the other. Fortunately, sir, the right hon. gentleman, among his other splendid and eminent qualifications as a debater in this house, has one, which renders it easier with respect to him than to any other person, to retrace the course of his arguments on the different subjects which come before us. It was said of some ancient orator, I think of Pericles, that he 'left a sting in the ears of his auditors.' The right hon. gentleman has a similar faculty. Whatever argument he sustains, he has such a happy talent of marking his way by whimsical analogies, and fanciful illustrations, that after his arguments themselves are forgotten, the remembrance of those illustrations easily recalls them to the mind. I shall be enabled, by a few of these illustrations, to recall to the recollection of the house the principles maintained by the right hon. gentleman in the course of his opposition to the plans of his predecessors, and to exhibit these very principles scattered through different parts of the plan which the right hon. gentleman has himself proposed for our adoption. Ballot, we all know, was the most odious of all grievances—the most intolerable. Accordingly, a countryman, hit by the ballot, was, in the right hon. gentleman's imagination, like a stricken deer, 'hæret latere lethalis arundo;' he was like David Simple looking about for a true friend. Concurrent recruiting—the recruiting for two different services, the limited and unlimited, with two proportionate bounties—was another of the right hon. gentleman's aversions. This was precisely like the man who had two cats, a great cat and a little cat; and who must needs cut two holes in the bottom of his study door, one to admit the great cat, the other to admit the little one. Nothing could be more absurd! except, indeed, the recruiting from one service to another, from the limited to the unlimited; and this the right hon. gentleman absolutely overwhelmed with similitudes. It was like decanting; it was like double distillation; it was like a pump; it was like capillary tubes; it was like a reservoir; it

was like a cow's stomach; it was like the lobby of the house of commons. Now sir, nothing, as I have said, can be more happy than these illustrations; they are very useful, too, as they afford a clue through the variety of the right hon. gentleman's conceptions;—not a clue, like that of old, by which the right hon. gentleman might be able to find his way back out of his own labyrinth; but rather like that of the fair Rosamond, by which his pursuers are enabled to follow him into it. Strange as it may seem, therefore, when we follow the right hon. gentleman into all the recesses and intricacies of his plan, we find him employed in putting together all the old exploded contrivances of his predecessors. Who could have thought that these heterogeneous materials, on which he has exhausted all his pleasantry, the stricken deer, and David Simple, and the cat and the kitten, and the decanter, and the still, and the pump, and the reservoir, and the capillary tubes, and the cow's stomach, and the lobby of the house of commons—that all these would, after all, be found in the philosophical apparatus with which the right hon. gentleman himself is to exhibit his own military experiments.—Yet so it is. The ballot he proposes, it is true, to abolish in the militia; but he establishes it for his trained mass, in a tenfold proportion, and accompanied, as usual, by its old friend, fine. The concurrent recruiting he proposes to introduce into the English militia; the transfusion, or double enlistment, he continues where he finds it, in the Irish; contradicting in this manner every principle which he has himself promulgated, and adopting every practice which he has himself condemned. I am far from contending, however, that by this contradiction of himself alone, the right hon. gentleman has necessarily precluded himself from forming a good plan. I contend, on other grounds, that he has not formed one, and on these grounds I contend that he has completely failed in establishing the viciousness of the principles of those which he proposes to abolish. I contend, therefore, that the question which the house has to decide to-night, so far as the additional force bill is concerned, is purely a question of comparison—of comparison between two modes of applying the same principles, that which already exists, and which has been found good for something at least, and that which the right hon. gentleman purposes to propose,

and which promises nothing salutary, and nothing useful. It is not a question simply whether the additional force bill shall be repealed, and its principles altogether got rid of—for the principles, after all, the right hon. gentleman promises to re-enact —but whether we shall gratify him by giving up a measure altogether, which a little alteration may make unobjectionable, and then trust to such hopes as he has given us for a perfect system to be produced hereafter. That any thing which he has yet opened deserves that name, the most sanguine of his admirers cannot contend or believe.—But even if the additional force act had failed of its effect as completely as the right hon. gentleman contends (which I deny), let the right hon. gentleman moderate his imaginary triumph, and before he congratulates himself on having done that which his great predecessor failed in accomplishing, on having bent the Ulyssean bow, which had foiled the strength of that mighty master; let him consider a little, whether the objects which they undertook to accomplish were precisely the same. Otherwise I imagine the comparison cannot be fairly instituted, nor the merit of the right hon. gentleman's success, or rather the demerit of his failure, as compared with that of my late right hon. friend, satisfactorily ascertained. My right hon. friend, like the right hon. gentleman, was desirous of maintaining and supplying a considerable regular army; but he considered this as a task to be performed within certain limits, which the right hon. gentleman disregards—within the limits of the British constitution. My right hon. friend thought it his duty to raise as large an efficient military force as could be raised, without endangering the principles of our ancestors, and the liberties of the country. If he felt that he was the minister of a great empire, called upon to provide for its security, and to perfect its military system; he felt also that he was the minister of a free government, and that in all his endeavours to that end, he must have respect to the rights, to the feelings, and to the habits of the people. If the right hon. gentleman has been able to free himself from all those awkward embarrassing prejudices, and to get rid of the 'friction' which they necessarily occasion; if he has persuaded himself that the only problem which he had to solve was the raising a great regular army, without reference to the dangers

and the mischiefs to which a great regular army is liable,—he certainly set himself a much easier task, though I do not think that he is much the nearer to the performance of it. That his plan for raising an army, simply and by itself considered, and granting him as the foundation of its success the destruction of every other force, and the disregard of every constitutional principle:—that, even so it should succeed, is I think, utterly hopeless and incredible:—but if it was to succeed, what is it that we should gain? what is to be the perfect produce of all the right hon. gentleman's plans, the ultimate object of all his wishes? a large regular army to be sure,—but a regular army with all the civil disadvantages belonging to that constitution, but without its military perfection; an army permanent in peace, but dissoluble in war; with consistency enough to be formidable to liberty, but so fragile as to be liable to crumble under our feet in the hour of danger.—Such is not the military plan which would have contented my right hon. friend. I am persuaded it is not that which will content the house or the country. My right hon. friend could hear unmoved the repeated taunts of the right hon. gentleman—for I would ask the right hon. gentleman what term of reproach, what expression of contumely and contempt he has spared, what epithet of folly and fatuity he has not applied to my right hon. friend for the imputed failure of his plan of military improvement? This failure was sufficient in the right hon. gentleman's contemplation to counterbalance all the merits of my right hon. friend, all the services rendered to his country during an administration of eighteen years, during eight of which he had the advantage of the right hon. gentleman's co-operation! I might now retaliate upon the right hon. gentleman for a failure more complete; a more ridiculous contrast of big promises with inadequate results surely was never presented to the world. But I restrain myself. My right hon. friend, while he agreed with the right hon. gentleman as to the advantage of a large disposable force, never was infatuated, like him, to the degree of thinking that a huge unbalanced regular army, carried to an unlimited amount, was more necessary to our safety and power, than consistent with the spirit of our constitution. He felt it no reproach, that after all our exertion we were not yet, nor were likely to be, the first military power in the world.

He knew well, that being the first naval power, and founding on that distinction our claim to the first rank among nations; that being the first commercial, the first manufacturing, and one of the first agricultural countries in the world, it was not to be wondered at, that with a population comparatively so limited as ours we were not also a military power, to the same extent with the great military powers of the continent. But he felt that it would have been a reproach to us as a nation, that it would have been a reproach to every class of the community, if it could have been imputed to us, that while the limits of our population, and the diversity of our pursuits and occupations, necessarily prevented the raising and maintaining a regular army on the same scale as the great powers of the continent;—if those same causes had prevented us from providing effectually for the defence of the country; and providing for it by such exertions as should at the same time render disposable, in a great degree, whatever regular force it is in our power or our policy to raise. With these sentiments he cherished, and would have continued to cherish and uphold, all those institutions which either springing voluntarily out of the bosom of the country, or produced by a mild and understood process of necessary compulsion (a compulsion, mitigated to the utmost degree that is compatible with the attainment of the object), form an efficient resource for the internal defence of the kingdom; and at the same time retain some sympathy with the habits and feelings of civil life. And he would, I am confident, have opposed a project for destroying or disheartening and discountenancing all those institutions, and relying exclusively on the army of the crown.—The right hon. gentleman proceeds on a different principle. He thinks we can never have regular army enough. He thinks we need have nothing but regular army. Or if he admits, willingly, into his plan any other species of force, it is only as subsidiary to the regular army. He looks for that subsidiary force, not in the voluntary exertions of the higher and middling classes of society, but in the compulsory training of the lower; he would disarm the property of the country, and train the rabble.—Such as his object is, I do not think his plan is adequate to effect it. The first question to be decided is, whether his plan will produce an army at all: and the second, whether if it does, it would

be such an army as the house could regard without jealousy. I think the right hon. gentleman has not established either point satisfactorily. I think he has not shown that he can keep up force enough of the only description which he professes to think worth having. And I think that that description of force, however valuable, is not that to which alone, unbalanced, uncontrolled, the country can safely be intrusted.—Sir, I am far from wishing that a measure should be fastened on the country, which the government are determined not to carry into effect; but I certainly wish that the house should, by their vote, show that they do not think the right hon gentleman's plan all-sufficient as a substitute for our present system, unless it shall be very considerably altered from what it has been stated by him. Sir, I would myself be the first to move that the additional force act should be referred to a committee for the purpose of adding to what is defective, and correcting what is erroneous; and I would even after that willingly abandon it altogether, if it were found inferior to the amended plan of the right hon. gentleman. But my object is, to gain time to institute this comparison: my object is, not to part precipitately with what we have, until we are better satisfied of the advantages of what is intended to be proposed to us, and I shall therefore move, That for the word 'now,' in the original motion, be substituted the words 'this day three weeks.'"

The amendment proposed by Mr. Canning on this occasion was negatived. At the close of the discussion, Mr. Canning displayed promptitude, courage, and ability. Mr. Fox, among other observations, made the following remark:

"The right hon. gentleman has displayed no little share of dexterity, in evading the discussion of the only question before the house. I admit his speech was a most able one, but it appears to have one defect; that is, that no part of it was directed to the consideration of the act it was proposed to repeal."

In reply to this, Mr. Canning said:

"I beg leave to ask, for what purpose Mr. Wyndham has

brought forward his system, if it is not intended that it should be considered by every man in the country? Is a system, over which the whole nation are lamenting—which has filled with alarm and dismay every man in it—to be passed over in silence? If a man proposes a series of resolutions, and concludes a four hours' speech with moving the first of them, are we to be debarred from considering the whole? The right hon. gentleman is much mistaken, if he supposes there is any shyness on this side to encounter his system, than which there could be nothing more preposterous and absurd;—a system calculated to shake the whole of our military establishment—to produce dissatisfaction in the army—to make it doubt of the propriety of its existence; a system——"

At this portion of Mr. Canning's speech, lord Temple rose to order, and stated that he did conceive the language employed by the right hon. gentleman not fit to be attributed to a proposition brought forward by any member of the house, much less to a member of his majesty's government. On this, Mr. Canning rose in considerable heat, and replied as follows:

"I trust, Mr. Speaker, we are not come to those times when a strong government, which shall be unable to answer an argument, shall be able to put it down. I trust, sir, that we are not to have silence imposed upon us in this house. I do hope that the noble lord, and those who are connected with him in his majesty's government, will not deprive us of the liberty of speech;—that we shall be allowed the freedom of discussing their measures. I do hope that the noble lord does not mean to have recourse to a plan of which I have formerly heard. It was once observed to Mr. Burke, by a member of this house, that he was surprised ministers, instead of debating, did not try the effect of silence in this house. To which he answered, 'that they had tried it, and they found it would not do.' So I will tell the noble lord. Why did his right honourable friend bring forward his plan before the recess, if he does not mean to proceed with it immediately? Does he mean that it should go forward, or does he not?"

On the tenth of May, we find Mr. Canning again attacking Mr. Wyndham. The subject was the iron duty bill; and Mr. Canning represents the right honourable secretary as contending that "it was more agreeable to the public to have a burdensome tax doubled at once, than to have it increased by moderate degrees."

On the mutiny or limited service bill, brought forward, on the 30th of May, by Mr. Wyndham, as secretary at war, Mr. Canning continued the firm and able advocate of the military arrangements made by Mr. Pitt, when in power, and the determined opponent of every measure which was intended to supersede these arrangements. With him compulsory enrolment for the army had greater charms than voluntary enlistment; and he preferred this enrolment for life to the enlistment for a term of limited service. In the discussion, he treated the plan of the minister with the utmost ridicule and scorn. It was a reverie, a visionary refinement, a piece of ingenious folly; any thing but a wise and practical scheme of legislation. And it must be confessed that there is considerable force in the following concluding observations of Mr. Canning:

"It is against all experience that voluntary enrolment alone should suffice for all the military purposes of a great nation: there is no instance in the world in which it has been found sufficient. Recognising this truth, we have in this country had recourse to a mixture of compulsory service; we have applied compulsion in its most mitigated form, and to home service only; for foreign service we have recruited by voluntary enlistment, but finding the difficulty of filling our ranks by those means, we have not hitherto thought it wise to increase that difficulty by multiplying threefold the opportunities of quitting the service. This the right hon. gentleman now proposes to do. He proposes, in addition, to discourage, more or less,—in some

instances he has suspended, and in some he has abandoned, the modes of compulsory enlistment. I ask him, if his theory should fail, what refuge has he left him but conscription? I say that his attempt to square every thing to a theory will lead to the necessity, at some time or other, of employing rude force; that his delicate and fastidious refinements will be the parent of a severe and undiscriminating necessity. It will be too late to retread our steps when the hour of that necessity arrives. In God's name, let us not precipitate it; at least, let us not be persuaded to do so, by such arguments as we have heard this night! What argument in fact have we heard upon this subject, to solve the obvious difficulties which are in every body's mind, but more especially that difficulty which of itself is conclusive against the adoption of the right honourable gentleman's system, as a general system, and which I have reserved to this period of what I had to say, as that which distinguishes the case of this country from that of any other; and as that to which, unsatisfactory as the answers from the other side of the house have been upon every other point, they are so peculiarly and singularly unsatisfactory, as to provoke not remark only, but indignation! The house will readily apprehend that I allude to the colonial service. It is plain, that if the example of all other countries, if the example of France, were as distinctly encouraging as they have been shown to be the reverse, still the extensive colonial possessions of this country, and the great proportion of our army which it is necessary to employ in their defence, would alone be sufficient to discourage the adoption of the system by this country. I will not take up the time of the house by pointing out the obvious difficulties and dangers arising from this system to the defence of our colonies;—but mark the answer, and the only answer which has been attempted to be given to them!—The right honourable gentleman expressed a hope, in which the honourable colonel faithfully followed, that the danger might not be quite so great as it appeared; and that before it actually occurred, means might be found to remedy it: and this is all!—After so many years' debate, after so many months of official deliberation, the right honourable gentleman, in bringing forward a plan for the complete alteration of the established military system of the country,

is no otherwise prepared to meet the objection which every man in this house and out of this house; which every man who has either written, or spoken, or conversed, or thought upon the subject, has had uppermost in his mind, than by a vague and distant hope, that at some time or other, somebody or other may, in some way or other, discover something or other, which shall, somehow or other, remedy some one or other of the manifold inconveniences and dangers which we all concur in apprehending!—As to the right honourable gentleman himself, he washes his hands of it: it is not to him that we are to look for the solution of the difficulty: and with this explanation parliament is to be satisfied!—Sir, to such a plan as this, introduced in such a manner, supported by such arguments, fraught with such difficulties and dangers; a plan unnecessarily invading the prerogative of the crown, and unadvisedly committing the faith and discretion of parliament,—I cannot but give my most decided and unqualified opposition. I do not thereby mean to pronounce any opinion against the expediency of trying the experiment of limited service.—The crown has already the power to try it. Let the right honourable gentleman,—let the king's ministers exercise their constitutional right to advise the crown to make the trial, if they shall think fit: but let them not insist upon making parliament a party to their experiment. No practical advantage is gained by our interference; and by abstaining from interposing, we shall at least avoid many practical disadvantages which may result from it."

June 7. The same subject produces a recapitulation of the same arguments and topics, with the addition of a caustic and powerful attack on administration. It is thus Mr. Canning endeavours to produce discord between the right honourable secretary at war and the supporters of his measure. Towards the close of his speech, he observes:

"My honourable friend below me (Mr. Wilberforce) has taken this matter upon a yet higher tone, and has poured forth abundant eloquence upon the topic of the union of character between the soldiers and citizens; of the incompatibility of in-

definite military service with a free civil constitution; and of the necessity of making the soldiers partakers as far as possible, and at all events reversionary heirs of that liberty which they are employed to defend. My honourable friend has told us, that all history exhibits the important truth, that the armies of free countries have uniformly been victorious; that they have been so, because the armies themselves have been free. The theory is so beautiful, that we cannot but lament that it should want the recommendation of truth. I forget who it is that says, that men read history with such different eyes, and retain such different impressions of it, that you would hardly think it possible that they could have been reading the same thing. For my part, when I endeavour to recollect the most splendid and striking examples of conquest and military glory of the ancient or the modern world, I find it difficult to prevent the names of Philip of Macedon, and of his son; the name of Julius Cæsar; the name of the king of Prussia, and still more that of Buonaparte, from occurring to me: and I find myself at a loss to attribute any part of their successes to the enthusiasm of liberty or to the energy of a constitutional spirit. I am far from wishing to disparage the suggestions of my honourable friend, but I am anxious that a serious and most important question should be placed in its true light, and stripped of the glare of popular fallacy. But if I am able to hear this argument with complacency, at the same time that I deny its force, I cannot suppress my astonishment and admiration at the patient silence of the right honourable secretary (Mr. Wyndham). The right honourable gentleman has heard, not to-night only, but on former nights, such doctrines respecting the mixture of the military and civil character, as I should have thought would have made him start from his seat to vindicate the very first principles of his system. If there were one thing which he laboured more than another in that memorable speech, in which he poured forth his whole soul, the accumulation of many years' meditation, upon these subjects; it was the distinctness and inviolable separation of the soldier from the citizen. The soldier he described as utterly segregated and set apart from the population in which he lived; as belonging to a world of his own, and not looking beyond the limits of it; exempt from toiling for his own

subsistence; but devoting himself to habits of life, to discipline, and laws, and institutions of peculiar strictness and severity, neither partaking in the solicitudes nor enjoying the immunities of civil life. So far from proposing to approximate the soldier to the citizen, he thought (as the house well remembers) that the occasional assumption of the military title and the military garb, by the volunteers, who were still irretrievably citizens, had affected the soldiers' character with a contamination which it would be difficult to remove. And yet the right honourable gentleman has now, for two nights, sat by and heard his measure supported, on the ground that it tends distinctly and directly to produce the very effect which he has so strenuously disclaimed and deprecated. He heard on a former night an honourable and distinguished member from Ireland (Mr. Grattan) descant in a strain of learned and splendid declamation on the necessary union of the two characters, which he wishes to keep asunder. He heard the same night, the honourable and learned gentleman near him (the solicitor-general) deduce from the works of Mr. Justice Blackstone an argument, that the separation of the soldiery from the mass of his majesty's subjects was wholly incompatible with our free constitution. He has heard the same argument to-night from the noble lord near him (lord H. Petty), from the learned lord (the lord advocate), and from my honourable friend (Mr. Wilberforce). He has heard it asserted, as the main principle and chief praise of his measure, that it promotes and secures this contaminating union; and, to my astonishment, he has accepted in silence the panegyrics which his feelings must have disavowed. I can excuse him for having disdained to answer the attacks of his opponents, but I am surprised that he should not have vindicated himself from the support of his friends.—Upon the whole, sir, nothing has been urged in the debate of this night to change the opinion which I had formed upon this measure. The advantages held out from it still appear to me to be visionary and theoretical; the practical inconveniences and dangers manifest and undenied; the remedies of those dangers uncertain and precarious, and, by the avowal of the very author of the measure, rather to be hoped for than confidently expected. The stake put to hazard is nothing less than the whole regular army;

—that army upon which (exclusively, as the right honourable gentlemen contend) the security of the empire is to rest. And all this at a moment like the present!—The bill, I am afraid, is gone too far to admit of opposition in the whole, or amendment in many parts. One part only of one danger it is yet in our power to guard against. The amendment proposed by my honourable friend affords us this opportunity. It is the last twig at which we can catch, before we are precipitated into all the danger which awaits us. It is too late for the house to decide against measures which hazard the army altogether; but it is yet in their power to take a security for its being kept together, at least in time of war."

So entirely was Mr. Canning tied and bound by the chains of party, that no measure of administration, however excellent in itself, or consonant with his own most cherished sentiments, could secure his support, or even neutralize his opposition. It is little to his honour that he suffered the great moral question of the abolition of the slave trade, which, on former occasions, he had so vehemently and eloquently advocated, to be carried through parliament without his voice being raised either to advance its progress or to celebrate its triumph. All that he could bring himself to say, on this his confessedly favourite measure during other administrations, was cold, brief, waspish, and unworthy of his great and good mind. On the 10th of June, he spoke to the following effect: "He thought it impossible for the ingenuity of man to devise a form of words, contributing to the repeal of the slave trade, that he should not concur in. He lamented, however, that the house had not the subject more fully before them, and censured his majesty's ministers for not bringing it more tangibly and efficiently forward, during the vacant interval that

presented itself between the recess and the time that the right honourable secretary (Mr. Wyndham) brought forward his military plan ! ! !" In the last debate he, however, declared himself as "decidedly for the most speedy abolition of so disgraceful a traffic."

It was on this occasion that Charles James Fox, justly styled by Sheridan "the apostle of humanity," made the memorable declaration: "So fully am I impressed with the vast importance and necessity of attaining what will be the object of my motion this day, that if, during the almost forty years that I have now had the honour of a seat in parliament, I had been so fortunate as to accomplish that, and that only, I should think I had done enough, and should retire from public life with comfort and conscious satisfaction that I had done my duty."

The Chelsea Hospital Bill afforded Mr. Canning another opportunity of indulging his invectives against the administration. At the close of an argumentative speech on the 12th of June, Mr. Canning said:

"The whole of the argument, if argument it might be called, of the right hon. gent. (Mr. Wyndham) resolved itself simply into a claim of confidence on the part of administration. The house were to vote this bill, they were to take the pledge contained in it, in perfect confidence that the ministers would exact nothing from them in consequence of that pledge but what the house must approve, when it should come to be submitted to their consideration. And the right honourable gentleman who spoke last seemed to take it very ill that this confidence was withheld, and the propriety of giving it questioned, by persons who, as he said, at the outset of the present government had professed a desire to support them. For my own part, said the right honourable gentleman, I have no pledge or promise of that sort to account for; I have nothing to retract, or qualify, or explain. I never offered any general professions of support. I never

thought myself called upon to do so. I have given my opinion freely, as a member of parliament, on the measures of the government, as they have been brought forward: and sorry have I been to find, that scarcely one of the measures which have originated with them has been such as I did not feel myself bound to oppose. And I quite concur in the opinion expressed by my noble and learned friends (lord Castlereagh and Mr. Perceval) as to the general character both of the system of the present ministers, and of the manner in which it has been carried into effect, and in which public business has been conducted in this house, since this great administration came into office—that nothing can form a more ludicrous contrast than their promises and their performance. Of one noble person, indeed, in the other house of parliament (lord Grenville), who forms a part of the administration, I have once before had occasion to speak. Perhaps it is to that occasion the right honourable gentleman alluded. I did once say (it was early in the session, and before the measures and system of the government had been developed) that I was desirous of placing confidence in an administration of which he was the head. My personal confidence, my personal esteem and regard for that noble person, continue unimpaired: but to talk of him now at the head of the government, after all that we have heard, all that we have seen, to consider him as the presiding and directing mind, is impossible. I am sorry for it: but I admit no claim for confidence arising from an expression which was applied to an individual, and which was founded on an error as to his weight and situation in the government. In his colleagues I neither have, nor ever professed to have, the confidence which they now demand; and by my vote of this night I shall certainly refuse to give it to them."

On the same subject, on the 16th of June, there is a similar attack, though not so manly; for it is conveyed through an affected compliment to Lord Howick, which that nobleman refused to accept at the expense of his colleagues.

Even those who are not disposed to be lavish of

their commendations of Mr. Canning, during this period of his parliamentary career, must yet very warmly approve of the high tone and spirit which he uniformly assumed and exhibited when the pre-eminence and glory of the country were likely to suffer by unnecessary concessions to foreign states. The interests of Great Britain were with him not only paramount to all others, but he was determined to place them on an elevation where they would not only appear to the best advantage, but where it would be impossible to endanger their security, either by the policy or the power of rival nations. In this view, we cannot but regard as a noble burst of patriotism his speech on the American intercourse bill, delivered on the 17th of June, and which evinces an extensive knowledge of the doctrines then in vogue, on the subject of commercial intercourse, when that intercourse was likely to involve important political considerations.

On the general policy of the measure recommended to parliament by the bill which originated with the ministers, and which was ably supported by the attorney-general, Mr. Canning, in reply to the arguments of the latter, in favour of a measure, the effect of which would be the removal of all the colonial restraints in the navigation act, having demolished his array of facts, proceeds in the following strain :

" So much for the learned gentleman's facts. Now for the general policy which the learned gentleman recommends to us. He says, that rather than violate a law frequently, you should enact another to make that violation legal. When you cannot enforce an act of parliament in its strictness, you should do what? pass another to amend and modify it? No, pass another

that is a direct repeal and contradiction of it. When a law becomes difficult to be enforced to its full extent, when it becomes inconvenient, or troublesome, or distasteful to ministers, what is the natural course of a government, at least of an omnipotent government, such as this country is at present blessed with, a government which abhors detail, which scorns to descend into the little affairs and petty interests of any class of men, what but to abrogate it at once, and for that purpose to bring before parliament one grand sweeping clause to do the whole away, without the difficulty of descending into particulars? This they are pleased to call revising the system of our laws; but one way of revising a system is to examine it, and one way of understanding a thing is to examine it with deliberation, and after having so done, the result is what we call decision: in this case act with as much decision as you please; but what I ask of you is, that your decision should not precede inquiry, but what you do should be the result not of arbitrary will, but of well-considered information. But the hon. and learned gentleman thinks that the navigation laws will be found inconvenient in some particular instances, or incompatible with the extent of empire which we may enjoy; but must these laws be altogether repealed because they may be found inconvenient in some particulars? I trust not. Do I mean to say, therefore, that it is better that our colonies in the West Indies should starve, than our navigation laws should be made to give way? Nothing of the kind. I do mean to say, that there are means of moderating the rigour of these laws, and that like any other laws they may even be suspended in cases of absolute necessity; and I say too, that notwithstanding this same experience of thirteen years, I am persuaded there are, or may be, means of supplying the colonies from this country in a manner nearly, if not entirely, adequate to their necessities; and I contend, that it would be extremely rash to suspend an entire system, because in some few instances you find that it cannot be enforced to its utmost rigour: revise the system, if you will; but in that case what I contend is, that you ought to receive information upon the subject before you proceed upon your legislative enactments. But it seems the responsibility of these suspensions of the law of navigation is not to be abandoned any longer to the governors of the islands, but is to be transferred to the great and wise men

at home, who constitute his majesty's present ministry. Now I beg the house to consider of this responsibility. At present the governors of the colonies are left to act according to their discretion upon a view of local circumstances, of which they have perfect knowledge. They are bound to prove that they have acted under such circumstances with a sound discretion; and upon this proof they are indemnified: a rational responsibility, inasmuch as it attaches to those who have the means of knowing precisely what they do. The alteration proposed upon this system is, to take the whole power and discretion out of the hands of those who alone can have any knowledge how it ought to be exercised, and whose conduct parliament is necessarily to review (for their conduct is of course brought under the view of parliament the very next session), and to put it into the hands of those who can have no knowledge whatever of any of the local circumstances by which discretion may be guided; who are subject indeed to a responsibility, but a responsibility of a very different nature, one which never can be enforced except in such momentous cases, as may compel parliament to call great ministers of state to an account for high misconduct, a very cumbrous process, and one which is never resorted to except in extreme cases. I would ask, therefore, is it advisable to take away the responsibility of those, whose conduct must come under the revision of parliament every session, and to fix it upon those, whose conduct you can never examine without grave suspicion of criminality? In fact, upon a subject like this, it would never be examined at all. But as we are speaking of the discretion to be intrusted to ministers, let us see how that discretion has been already used on this very subject. We find on the second of April, while this bill was only in contemplation, but before it had been mentioned to parliament, his majesty's secretary of state for the colonies thinks fit to write to the governors of the West India islands, not to exhort them to take care how they exercise their power, not to say that they will be held to their responsibility if they should in any instance relax the navigation laws unnecessarily; but he sends out to the governors of the West Indies one general sweeping direction, to suspend the navigation laws during the present war, during the whole war, without any qualification whatever! a most unusual, and, I

will say, a most unjustifiable exercise of authority; and with a confident anticipation of the decisions of this house, he adds, that the ministers will take care that the usual indemnity shall be provided! This is before the act of parliament has passed. The ministers assure the governors of the West Indies they will take care that parliament shall pass an act according to what they consider 'the usage of parliament.' Now I do say, that no person whatever is entitled to write in this manner prospectively of what parliament will do: 'an act of parliament *shall* pass according to the *usage* of parliament.' I should be glad to know by what usage of parliament any one of the king's servants at home can tell the king's servants abroad, that parliament shall pass an indemnity for an act, which when ordered to be done, was against law. I must say, that it is a most extraordinary and indecent exercise of ministerial power. But have we any better security for the safety of our colonies, by shifting the responsibility from the governors of the islands to the ministers at home? Is it not obvious, that the evil of the discretionary power must be increased? I will suppose the case of a representation coming over from the West Indies, in which it should be stated, that there was an absolute necessity for a certain immediate supply; suppose the ship-owners, on being heard, were to persuade government that they would supply the wants of the islands, and that government, yielding to their suggestions, send out an order to the West Indies against opening the ports; suppose, that before the supplies could arrive from hence, the inhabitants of the colonies were starving; I trust that the rigour of that order would not be obeyed by the governor of any one of the islands in such a case; but that every one of them would consider it as his duty to his sovereign and to his country, to disobey it; but if he adhered to that order, he could not be called to an account, for, under the authority of this bill, there is no discretion left to him. Surely this is putting the governors in the most painful situation, a situation unjust in the extreme, at the same time that it exposes the colonies to unnecessary hazard. So much for future discretion and responsibility: at present, I defy you to call any governor whatever to account for any the most wanton suspension of the navigation laws. The sweeping authority, which the right hon. secretary

of state (Mr. Wyndham) has sent to the colonies, provides for the suspension of the whole of the navigation laws during the whole continuance of the war. Such is the foretaste which ministers have given us of the use which they will make of the discretionary power, which they require at our hands. We are now called upon to sanction the right hon gentleman's letter, by enacting the substance of it into a law. For one, I cannot consent to do so; nor can I hesitate in saying, that ministers ought to take more care than they have done in this instance, that their own acts are right, before they make them the foundation of any legislative measure. At all times, and under all circumstances, the multiplying laws unnecessarily is a great evil. I think it is not contended on the other side of the house, that there is that urgent practical necessity for the passing of this bill, which would make you overlook all other political considerations; what you now propose to have an act of parliament for doing may be done at any time without an act of parliament, if necessary to be done at all. If there be no instant and urgent call upon you, it is clear that you ought not to adopt such a measure without inquiry; go into that inquiry you will find the measure unnecessary altogether: we are not now providing for the urgent and immediate supply of the islands, that is secure. The principle on which any permanent provision on so important a subject should be founded, is surely matter fit for the gravest deliberation of parliament; and I would venture to ask whether, before coming to a decision on such a subject, it does not become parliament to consider the political state of the world, to consider in what way the adoption of a permanent measure of this kind may bear upon any points, which are or may be in discussion between us and America; and how far the government of America, or at least considerable parties and leading individuals there, whose sentiments towards this country are avowedly of the most hostile nature, may be likely to consider the passing of this bill as a concession on the part of this country. The hon. and learned gentleman, who spoke last, professes to be acquainted, in a peculiar degree, with the manner in which the trade is carried on between America and our West India colonies. He has stated, that no articles of any kind but lumber and provisions are imported from America to those colonies;

but I understand that, in point of fact, other articles, such as soap, candles, leather, and other manufactured articles, do find their way from America into the West Indies; and if so, if they do now find their way before the passing of this bill, they will afterwards find their way still more, for this bill, whatever prohibitions you may insert in it, will obviously facilitate the intercourse; the trading, in the first instance, will be general, and you will be left to take care of your exceptions in each particular instance. Thus you will be giving to America a very great boon, not only to the extent, which you admit, but much beyond it; it will be impossible to prevent many things from being done under colour of this act, which cannot be done at present: and if you do in fact give such a boon, it is idle to pretend ignorance or indifference about it: either you mean it, or you do not; if not, why pass the bill at all? our colonies can get what they want without it. If you intend to gratify America, how does she receive it? as a favour for which she is thankful, or as a concession which she claims?—It is notorious, that there are points of great delicacy in discussion with America. I do not wish to give or to ask any opinion upon them; but I must ask the right hon. secretary (Mr. Fox) whether he is already so weary of the approbation and applause, which he received for his conduct in the dispute with Prussia, that he cannot persuade himself to act in the same spirit towards America? I know he will tell me, that this act has no direct reference to America, that America is no party to it. But however that may be, it is no less true, that considerable advantages are afforded by it to America, and that, by this measure, you may embarrass yourselves in the consideration of any treaty you may have to enter into with that country. Suppose you should hereafter wish to repeal this bill at a time when America might be again, as she is now, in a state of ferment with regard to this country, would not they think the repeal of a law, so beneficial to their commerce, a measure so injurious, that the continuance of it may perhaps be made the price at which the friendship of America is to be purchased? and they will not be without arguments to sustain their claim: 'Was not the law necessary to your own convenience, they may say, and founded on the experience of thirteen or fourteen years before it was adopted? Did you not

upon deliberation adopt it as a measure of state policy? Did not we receive it as a measure of conciliation? Why, when the same reasons are still in force, should it be discontinued, unless as an indication of hostility to us?' Such may be, at some future and perhaps no distant period, the language of America. Do I therefore say, that all concession is in its nature necessarily bad? No, I do not; but I do say, that concession may be good or bad, according to the circumstances of time in which it is made; and I do further say, that a worse moment for this country to make any concession to America could not be chosen. What greater sacrifices could any country, friend or foe, expect from you than this which you are now about to make to America? Has France, has even France, with all the extravagance of her pretensions, ever been bold enough to ask you to suspend your navigation laws? I do not say that America asks you to do so; but I do say, that, in the situation in which you stand, you ought to take care to be above even the suspicion of an undue compliance. This measure, on the face of it, carries the appearance of a concession at a moment wherein it is your duty to stand upon your rights; it is at least liable to this construction, and if you pass it at the present moment it will be so thought of in America. Once again, where is the necessity for this measure? Cannot our West India plantations be supplied with every thing they want without it? Will they not be supplied exactly in the same manner, whether this bill passes or not? If there is no necessity for it, think of the danger there is in passing this bill into a law, not only on account of the injury you sustain by the suspension of your navigation laws, while that suspension continues, but also because you will by such a suspension as this bill provides, make it difficult, if not impossible, to revert to your former system. It is not denied, that it is an evil to suspend the navigation laws; but the evil is in some degree unavoidable. Be it so; but why aggravate what you cannot altogether avoid? Why make that suspension permanent, which when temporary and occasionally has fully answered every purpose? You say, you are only doing what has been already done for many years, that you only mean to do the same thing in a different manner. You may mean what you will; but certainly the effect of your bill will be to

suspend permanently, laws, which have hitherto only been suspended temporarily, to take responsibility from those who acted from knowledge of the necessity of each particular case, and rendered an annual account of each act of discretion, and to place it in the hands of others, who already have shown us what an extravagant use they mean to make, and how little account they propose to render of it, who have already anticipated for the whole of the war, the existence of a necessity, which has hitherto been ascertained annually, and never acted upon until ascertained. And you do this at a time and under circumstances, which induce inevitably the suspicion that, while you are thus sacrificing the leading principles of your navigation system, as well as the interests of that class of men, by encouraging whom you would encourage the maritime power of the country, you are making this sacrifice to a foreign power, at present no way favourably disposed to you, and in whom the appearance of concession is likely to beget an increased spirit of encroachment: and all this you are doing rashly and precipitately, shutting your eyes against the facts, which are offered to be proved to you, and relegating the evidence of those best capable of giving you information, to a period when it can neither be received with the same confidence, nor listened to with the same effect, when the mischief will have been incurred, and when the means of remedying it will be incalculably diminished.—This is the way in which are passing this most unnecessary and mischievous bill; these are the pretexts on which you endeavour to recommend it to this house; these are the dangers to which it will expose you; these are the evils which it will produce. I think it likely to be fatal to the best interests of the country, and therefore I shall give it my decided opposition."

During the few months which preceded the termination of the sessions, Mr. Canning continued to harass the administration. His active, determined, and powerful opposition had, from the commencement, rendered Mr. Fox's regular attendance in his place necessary. Night after night his measures were assailed by the ex-secretary. He was dying, but no tenderness

was shown him, and he could not be persuaded to abandon the post of duty. He neither spared himself, nor was spared by others. Alas! that the warfare of politics should be the worst species of deadly feud. But in the senate, or in the field, men devoted to their country must heroically fight her battles, and take the chance of war, either to triumph or fall in the conflict; and such was the doom of Pitt, of Fox, and of Canning. The cup goes round, and he that administers it to-day may be compelled to exhaust its very dregs to-morrow. Mr. Fox received his from no ignoble hand. Mind encountered mind in the struggle of principle, and the feeble frame alone yielded the victory to youth and constitutional vigour. There was one great man in Israel that died as "a fool dieth," by a dastardly assassin. Canning was hunted out of life; and, if a future age shall make inquisition for his death, it will have to be told, that he was the victim of a mean, personal, and petty persecution. A faction aimed the deadly thrust amid the deep execrations of an insulted nation. It was not the sword, *that* he could have braved, but it was the envenomed tongue; it was not the generous hostility of high and opposing principle; but it was the contemptible selfishness and pride, which could not endure a superior intellect, except in a subordinate station. It was upstart rank, affecting to treat with supercilious disdain the man, whose talents it hated, and whose innate nobility cast a shadow upon adventitious distinctions; its ribbons spun from the loom of yesterday, and its heraldic bearings scarcely dry from the artist's hands. Perhaps there was something retributive in this, "the measure that we mete to others shall be measured to

us again." Of Mr. Fox, whose serious illness and death were announced almost at the same time, we shall say more anon.

In July, when the report of the committee on the training bill was brought up, Mr. Canning, in reply, "congratulated the lord advocate of Scotland on the opportunity which had been afforded him of contributing, as much as in him lay, to extend the boon of this bill to Scotland, and could not help calling upon the house to notice the extraordinary system of carrying on the executive government, which they had now, by accident, discovered; as it appeared, that the lord advocate of Scotland had not even been consulted with, as to the practicability of extending this measure to that part of the United Kingdom; but had just declared, that he could, in eight-and-forty hours, frame the bill, so as to be applicable to that purpose; whilst the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Wyndham), by the united labour of this wonderful government, from whom so much was expected, and who were said to possess a concentration of all the talents and worth of the empire, had been four months in bringing it before the house, and when it was pressed by honourable gentlemen to extend it to Scotland, had pleaded, that it was too late to do that, which the labour of an individual was thus declared to be competent to in so short a space of time."

After stating some of the objections, which he entertained to the principle of the bill, the honourable gentleman concluded, by observing, "that this bill went to discredit a force upon which he could rely, and to substitute the crude produce of an experiment,

and that it was as much inferior to the bill it meant to supersede, as the mind of Mr. Pitt was superior to that which actuated the present measures."

On the eleventh, on the motion for a vote of thanks to the volunteers, Mr. Canning supported the original motion, and, in his peculiarly characteristic manner, said, that he objected to the amendment proposed by Mr. Sheridan,

"Because it was merely retrospective, and had no view to future services; it was not a preface but a postscript, not an exhortation but an epitaph. He went over much of the ground upon which the previous question had been previously opposed, and contended, that coming from the quarter it did, and supported by the same right hon. gentleman, whose sentiments, frequently expressed in that house, were known to be inimical to the volunteers, he must consider it as coming indirectly from him; for though it was the voice of Jacob, still the stroke came from the hand of Esau, and it would be utterly impossible for the most hostile government, determined to express the most hostile opinion to the continuance of the volunteer system, to do so in more direct and unequivocal terms than by a previous question, on an occasion like this. It was impossible to construe it in any other way; and he thanked his majesty's ministers for thus candidly expressing their sentiments, and setting all doubt at rest, as to their intentions respecting the continuance of the volunteers."

On the 19th of December the new sessions of parliament was opened by commission, and the speech of the commissioners dwelt on the calamities of war; the progress and the power of the enemy; the failure of the negociation for peace; the time employed in which the enemy had improved to subserve the purposes of his cruel rapaciousness and unparalleled ambition, and the necessity of union, firmness, and a spirit of courage and endurance in the nation, to meet the peculiar

exigencies of the perilous crisis, which had now arrived. On this occasion, Mr. Canning rose, not to propose an amendment to the address, which had been ably moved and seconded by the Honourable William Lamb and Mr. John Smith, but to introduce another, which, however, he contented himself with reading; and it was afterwards published in the journals of the day. The speech, by which this paper was prefaced, had, in some of its paragraphs, a fair show of candour, but an unrelenting hostility to the men in power was its more general character. The candour seemed designed only to render the censure the more effectual. He speaks in measured terms of Mr. Fox—sheds a passing generous tear, and ventures to blame one of the noblest acts of his political life. As a composition it is scarcely inferior to any former effort. It is argumentative, vivacious, and occasionally breathes a tone of insolence, which must have exercised to their full extent the passive and enduring virtues of the men he opposed. Alluding to the speech from the throne, on the point of unanimity, Mr. Canning said,

"Unquestionably the situation of the country was calculated to produce unanimity. But of unanimity there were different degrees. There was a description of unanimity which blinded every man's judgment to every thing that was wrong, and thus made him the passive instrument of any ministry. But there was another and a superior species, the professor of which, while he insisted on his right to investigate measures, and consider results, would yet give his cordial support to the government, in spite of the errors to which he would not allow himself to be wilfully blind. If, at any time, this latter course of proceeding was justifiable, when the judgment of every man, who possessed any judgment, ought to be exercised, it was the present. The

situation of the country divided itself into two considerations, our relative situation to the world, and our internal situation. With regard to the former, it was impossible that any thing more just or more eloquent could be said upon it, than what had been said by the hon. mover of the address. With regard to the latter, it afforded matter for deep meditation. A new parliament had been assembled, and they were now, for the first time, about to review the transactions of an administration, composed of men of great talents, who entered upon office not ten months ago, with this particular and distinct declaration, that all those who had preceded them had been in the wrong; that they had 'clubbed the battalion;' that every thing required correction and amendment; that nothing was in its place; that our resources were exhausted, our credit destroyed, our faith violated, and that we were unable to maintain our own rank among the nations of Europe, much less to assist others in regaining that which belonged to them. What followed? At the end of ten months, these very gentlemen say, that the resources of the country *remain* unimpaired. Those who, but ten months ago, exclaimed that they were in a state of the utmost dilapidation, now tell us—not that they have been retrieved, not that they have been re-established—but that they *remain* unimpaired. That is, that they never have been impaired. It was certainly very satisfactory to every man, that there should be even this stale tribute paid to those who had been formerly loaded with censure. But surely it would be too much to expect that any man, who had ever regulated his conduct by, who had followed the footsteps of, or who had considered the name of Pitt, as connected with the glory and happiness of England, could pass this part of his majesty's speech unnoticed. Amidst the accusations that had been vented against the late administration, those against their foreign connexions were not the least virulent. It had been said, that the continent had been lost by the confederacies, which England had so ill put together. But what was the nature of the system that had been substituted? It seemed as if those, who had happened to hear that a confederacy was a bad thing, had determined to repel every ally that might, by opposite conduct, have been attracted to us. But

of this new system it would be worth while to trace the operation, as well as the cause. On the first day of the first session of a new parliament, during whose existence the fate of the world might probably be decided, in whose time a struggle would, in all likelihood, take place, that would terminate either in total destruction, or complete safety, such a discussion was assuredly most important and most proper. The speech and address, which, at such a period as the present, were any thing but mere matters of form, might be considered in two distinct views. The first was as a mutual pledge between the sovereign and his people. Had it been possible to confine the speech and address to a description of the dangers of the country, and an enumeration of the best means of deliverance from those dangers, he would have been well content that the address should have gone up without a whisper of remark. But there was another view of the subject. The present was the constitutional opportunity afforded for both houses of parliament to express their opinion not only of the relations of government with foreign states, but of the relations of government with the country. Of this he begged to be understood that he was fully satisfied, whether, when the official documents should be laid on the table, it might or might not appear, that there had been any remissness, or want of dexterity, or blameable attention to delusive promises, that the cause of this country against France would not admit of the smallest question. The only matter in dispute was not whether or not the cause was sufficiently strong, but whether or not the cause had been prosecuted in the best manner, and at the most proper time. If it could be proved (which he did not in the least degree mean to insinuate) that the negociation had wilfully failed, he should be sorry that that circumstance should lead to the slightest hesitation in giving the most unqualified support to the war. In prosecuting his consideration of the subject, he could not acquit the late house of commons of an act of inconsiderate confidence. And here he must observe, that, with every man in the house, he sincerely lamented the absence and loss of that great man, with whom, in politics, he had so frequently differed; but the memory of which differences ought no longer to exist. Those, who were in habits of private friendship with that great man, might

deplore him more feelingly, but it was impossible that they could admire more than himself his transcendent talents—talents, the strength of which was sufficiently evinced by the awe and fear which his presence inspired in the breasts of his political opponents. Having stated thus much, he trusted he should be acquitted of any disrespectful imputation in what he was about to say. In order to judge correctly of the situation in which the country now found itself, it was necessary to revert to the last confederacy. After the dissolution of that confederacy, and considering the state in which Prussia and Russia stood, what was the clear and obvious policy of France, and what was the clear and obvious policy of England? He would state it fairly. No man could hesitate in saying, that unfortunate as that confederacy was, broken and disjointed as it might be, yet were its scattered limbs not without life and vigour. It was the clear and obvious policy of England to unite those divided parts, and to endeavour to produce an energetic whole. On the other hand, it was the clear and obvious policy of France to effect a complete dismemberment of the confederation, and if that could not be completely accomplished in reality, at least to accomplish it in appearance. Now, what had been the conduct of the two powers? Prussia signed a treaty of access to the confederacy just previous to its dissolution; an unequivocal proof of the disposition of the court of Berlin, manifested still more strongly by the declaration since published. Subsequently, however, Prussia was forced into measures, which brought upon her the prompt resentment of this country. But at the time that the house of commons approved of that resentment, did they know that a negociation was carrying on with France, for the restoration of that which Prussia had seized? There were two distinct questions. If it were simply asked, would you go to war for the recovery of that unjustly wrested from you? the answer would be, yes; but if a negotiation were carrying on to obtain the same object in another quarter, then the war would be superfluous. Even were this principle doubtful, yet, coupled with the certainty that it was the interest of this country to preserve Prussia, to retain her as an enemy to France, and to put up with, or overlook, any conduct that might involve Great Britain in a contest with her, it became established and irresistible. The

house would see what were the dreadful consequences of an original error in that respect; consequences which were now felt too late. While we were in the incongruous situation to which it gave rise, a war commenced between Prussia and France, undeniably instigated by the demands made by this country through her negociator at Paris. It was true, Hanover was not the sole cause of this rupture, but it was the main one, as the subsequent declaration of Prussia proved. The conduct of Great Britain to Prussia was therefore thus: Prussia, unable to resist the power of France, encroached upon us; we had, however, the option to pass over the just cause of complaint, which we possessed in consequence, and leave untouched the only power in Europe, which appeared capable of being the germ of an alliance hostile to the ambitious views of France. But the conduct of his majesty's ministers had been the converse of their policy. By that conduct, Prussia had been compelled to act without our advice and assistance, and to plunge into a war, of which, if our advice could not have prevented it, our assistance might at least have meliorated the termination. He did not mean to cast the slightest imputation on the diplomatic character of the noble lord employed by government on this occasion (Lord Morpeth); no man was better fitted for the office, both from the qualities of his head and heart, and because no man had been a more constant advocate for the justice of the cause of this country: but would any man of common reflection say, that if the restoration of Hanover were the sole object, it was worth while to make war against Prussia? The British government had continued at war with Prussia as long as the Prussian resources were unimpaired, and her strength unexhausted; but as soon as there seemed the prospect of a war between France and Prussia, an ambassador was despatched to Berlin, with instructions adapted to all possibilities, except that which was most probable, namely, that war had actually commenced; for that no provision had been made; an event of which the most common information might have shown the likelihood. As soon, however, as Lord Morpeth returned, our government began to perceive their error, and to think that there was really something like war between France and Prussia—from the trifling circumstance that the Prussian army was annihilated! They

then sent a few military men to their aid, and when the Prussian monarchy shall be destroyed, they will perhaps send an army! When the gentlemen opposite to him came into power, they exclaimed, that nothing was more shabby than the foreign diplomacy of Great Britain. It was even said, that there was not a man at a foreign court capable of writing a letter. As it was an undoubted right possessed by the good people of this country to canvass the conduct of their statesmen, he remembered to have heard it asserted in one of these political assemblages, that all our ambassadors in future were to be Ajaxes, Ulysses, and Phœnixes. Now it so happened, that there had been only one remove. Mr. Adair had succeeded Sir A. Paget at Vienna. Of course, as he was single, he must be the phœnix! But, in our diplomatic intercourse with foreign courts, we were taught to look for perfect frankness, sincerity, and openness; freedom from trick and intrigue, and a sort of pellucid simplicity. Now, what was the first tangible proof of this simplicity? Why, a minister at Paris negociating for peace, and another at Berlin instigating for war for the same object! Such conduct might be dextrous; it might be able—it might be any thing but frank, open, and undisguised.—As to that passage in the speech and the address which congratulated the country, that in those councils which preceded the war between Prussia and France, his majesty had no share, he was astonished that such a topic of consolation could have entered the head of any minister. Instead of showing that they had attempted to prevent evils, ministers called for approbation, on the ground of having abstained from any interference! But he believed neither Berlin nor Vienna, nor even London could be thus consoled. It ought to have been our care that the difference between France and Prussia should not have been too suddenly blown into a flame, lest it should have been too suddenly extinguished. In this part of the address it was therefore impossible for him to concur: he by no means meant to imply doubt of the justice of his majesty's quarrel with Prussia; but if France, by a nominal and illusive transfer of Hanover to Prussia, could plant a cause of dissension between Prussia and Great Britain, was not this a contrivance of the enemy which nothing but the plain and simple diplomacy adopted by our government could be blind to? France found Great Bri-

tain and Prussia in amity; with a tendency to coalesce. What was her object? To divide them; and by a pretended transfer to Prussia of the hereditary dominions of the king of Great Britain, to create a war between the two countries.—With respect to the negociation with France, this was not a time to discuss it, although some observations made by the hon. mover of the address might justify some strong comments upon that negociation. But it would be better to reserve these until the papers relative to the subject should be in possession of the house. He thought, however, that it would be but fair to state to his majesty's ministers what, as far as the documents had transpired, appeared to him to be the defective parts of their case. The British declaration contained three unproved allegations The first was, that the overture for peace had come from France; and as this was also insisted on in the speech, he had no doubt that ministers had something to produce, which would give an entirely new colour to this part of the transaction. He denied, however, entertaining any opinion, that, had the offer of peace proceeded from England, ministers would have been culpable. Had peace been a desirable thing, it mattered little in what quarter the proposal for it originated —Adverting to Mr. Fox's first letter to M. Talleyrand, he observed, that there were fifty other and better ways in which the intelligence which it contained might have been communicated, and he condemned most strongly the reception which the answer to that letter experienced. The assertion, that the British government were beginning a new course, as illustrated by the transaction alluded to, was false. Never had the British government been the stimulators of assassination. Had he held the situation which the late right hon. gentleman occupied, he should have thought it his duty to repel the accusation with contempt and indignation. The second unproved allegation contained in the British declaration related to the basis of the negociation, which was asserted to be the *uti possidetis;* now, throughout the negociation, the basis referred to was that stated in Mr. Fox's letter, the mutual honour of the countries; a basis no more like the *uti possidetis* than it was like the *propria quæ maribus.* The third unproved allegation, which he had no doubt that the French government had completely misrepresented, was, that

we had refused to treat except in conjunction with our allies. Now, from the partial documents that had been published, it appeared that that had been the case in the first instance, but that afterwards the British government had treated alone. He had no doubt that this would be satisfactorily cleared up, as the address stated in high terms of panegyric the great care of his majesty for his allies. The particular mention of Russia and Sweden was proof that some misrepresentation existed. Having thus stated the points which it was necessary for his majesty's ministers to elucidate, and having considered the state of this country with respect to foreign relations, he proceeded to examine our domestic situation. It was impossible but that he must look at our means of internal strength with the utmost seriousness. We must examine the physical force, and the spirit by which it was actuated. Our internal policy was intimately connected with this contemplation. And first, with regard to the dissolution of the last parliament; there was a great difference between questioning the exercise of an independent prerogative, and questioning the propriety of exercising it at such a period. If the dissolution were prompted by party views, with the hope of giving a triumph to ministers, and if, for these purposes, they created and revived party differences, at a time when they loudly called for unanimity, their conduct was highly culpable. But he had no doubt that ministers had some great public advantage to gain; for he could not suppose that they merely wished to obtain a few supporters in parliament; at least this he was sure they would not avow.—Another class of observations would apply to the practical means of defence and attack which the country possessed, and the mode in which those means had been managed and applied. Now, it was most extraordinary that in reading the speech, and the history of the last year, no one could suspect that the country was at war. There was not a feature of war in the speech, nor an act of war during the last year, in which government could assume any credit. There had not been even a single warlike plan, much less any warlike achievement. As for the internal defence of the country, a most laboured scheme had been brought forward last session; and when the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Wyndham) by whom it had been produced had been repeatedly questioned

whether or not it was intended to put it in execution, the answer was uniformly in the affirmative. In no single parish, however, had the slightest step been taken towards this end; and yet it was a reliance on this scheme that had been held out to induce parliament to allow the volunteers to crumble away, the militia to be diminished, and the regular army to be sent experimenting. And what kind of experimenting? We had heard of a great statesman, who stripped the country of troops, which he employed on various active services, and then boasted that he defended it at a distance. Could the gentlemen opposite make a similar boast? After orders, and counter orders, and confirmations of orders, and revocations of confirmations, and countermands, &c. &c. &c. an expedition actually did sail from the Downs, and arrived—where? at Plymouth! Certainly a place not very well provided with means of defence; and had this same expedition proceeded to some possession of the enemy not superior in strength to Plymouth, they very possibly might have succeeded in taking it. But perhaps this was meant as an experiment. It might have been said, 'We'll sail from the Downs, land at Plymouth, and surprise the dockers.' It is prudent to try to swim upon a table, before committing oneself to the waves. The right hon. gentleman was not accustomed to salt water, and he wished to begin with fresh. But could the country forget the loudness of his accusations against his predecessors for what he termed their supineness and neglect? Yet what had he himself done? When war was raging in Prussia, our peace minister was on his return! The whole amount of the right hon. gentleman's campaign was a fire-work before Boulogne, and—(yet that wanted confirmation)—an embarkation on the Paddington canal. But for the uncommon openness of the weather, it is probable that his army would have been frozen up at Uxbridge—(a laugh). But these were not the heaviest charges against the right hon. gentleman. That right hon. gentleman had declared it as his opinion, that in all military establishments, it was not the form, but the soul, the spirit, the nice sense of honour, that were to be cultivated and encouraged. Now, was not that right hon. gentleman aware, that by partial measures he had disgusted and dispirited the army more than he had improved their character by the monopoly of shoulder-knots and cockades? The report of their discontent

must have reached him. If not, it was time that he should be told of it. Let him recollect the recall of officers who had nobly fought and conquered for their country. Was Sir John Stuart's being superseded by the brother of a secretary of state (Gen. Fox) calculated to give animation and enthusiasm to the army? And when an expedition was ready for embarkation, were not the hopes of many gallant officers, who already anticipated victory at the head of their brigades, disappointed, because the rank of a favourite of that right hon. gentleman (Colonel Craufurd), to whom he meant no disrespect, was not entitled to command them?—He had before observed, that in the speech all notice of war seemed studiously to have been passed over, and yet some debts of gratitude remained to be paid; some acts of heroism had been displayed, which, had it been for no other purpose than to show that the British army already possessed the character which the right hon. gentleman only wished it did possess, might surely have been mentioned. To the records of parliament the historian looked for his materials. It was cruel to deprive the hero of the honourable reward of his military achievements, and it was disgraceful that government should dislike to sprinkle over the gloom of despondency with some of those achievements. It was true, they might say, that these achievements were not of their planning; but this was a period when party feelings should not withhold every glorious incitement to great actions. On these grounds, on the deficiency of that which ought to have been recorded in the speech, it was impossible for him to satisfy his feelings with the continuation of that omission in the address. The usual form in similar instances had been to endeavour to render the answer to the speech a vehicle for such sentiments as it might be wished to add; but the present speech was so contrived, that there was not a niche in which the additional sentiments of parliament could be properly placed, although many important points had been disregarded. There were many topics on which amendment to the address might be introduced, so many that he preferred substituting a new address altogether, leaving it to the option of the house which to adopt."—*The Lords Commissioners' Speech, Dec.* 19, 1806.

It was not to be expected that an attack like this

would be suffered to pass in silence; especially the allusions which were intended to cast odium upon the character of Mr. Fox. We cannot but deeply regret that the humanities of our nature are ever sacrificed at the shrine of party. What but this political sectarianism in its most virulent degree could have induced such a man as Mr. Canning to impute censure to a British minister for having promptly, and in the most direct manner, revealed to the minister of the ruler of France a plot for the assassination of his master, in the guilt of which the foul murderer had the effrontery to imagine that the British government would have no objection to participate. When Mr. Fox wrote to M. Talleyrand on this subject, he felt as a man, and acted like himself; nay, he acted the part of a high-born Briton, and took *precisely* the step dictated by the best policy. For straight-forward honesty is often not only admirable for its truth, but its wisdom. Between the statesmen thus brought into an unexpected correspondence there was no collusion; and if private communication at length led to official negociation, to restore peace and amity between the government which each represented, who but a blinded partizan would impute blame to either? If negociation failed, which humanity thus introduced, and perfidy defeated, let the blame fall where it was deserved. But for this, we must call it, ungenerous attack on the finest spirit of his age, and whose remains were scarcely cold in the tomb, we should not have been favoured with the vindication of his honoured and lamented friend, so pathetically and powerfully urged upon the attention of the house by Lord Howick.

It was truly affirmed by his lordship, that the exalted man so wantonly assailed was ever anxious and eager to defend the character of friend or foe when assailed by base aspersions

" He had done so at the court of France during the interval of peace; and when Buonaparte intimated to him, that my right hon. friend near me (Mr. Wyndham) was the abettor of a conspiracy against his life, he openly declared to him, in the presence of his whole court, that it was a false accusation; that he was sensible and confident it must be so, for that Mr. Wyndham was, to his knowledge, a gentleman possessing the highest sense of honour, and altogether incapable of so base a design. Then why should the letter of my distinguished predecessor be subject to the interpretation attached to it? But as to the circumstance of making the first overture of peace, I perfectly concur with the hon. gentleman, that there is nothing dishonourable in the thing itself, provided circumstances call for it. So far, indeed, am I from entertaining any such opinion, that were a promising opportunity to offer, and any change to appear in the pretensions of the enemy, I should not be slow to make an overture for negociation, from any fear of the reprehension that it might incur, particularly on the score of false pride. But with respect to the late negociation, I am warranted in asserting, that when the person at the head of the French government told one of his assemblies that the first overture was made by this country, he stated that which was untrue. The correspondence published by the French government is imperfect in a material point as to this part of the case. Only one letter in answer to the first letter of Mr. Fox appears in this publication, and a second letter, by which it was accompanied, is altogether omitted. In this second letter, which is by much the more material, Talleyrand writes somewhat in these terms, ' Probably you would desire to receive news from this country. I send you the emperor's speech to the legislative body, in which you will perceive how pacific his sentiments are. I do not ask what is the prevailing inclination with you: but if the advantages of peace are duly appreciated, you know upon what basis it may be discussed.'

Now, this letter being suppressed, the hon. gentleman, and others, who think with him, are of course incompetent to judge upon this point, with regard to which they seem disposed to form such a positive opinion."

It was, however, on the 5th of January in the following year, and on the subject of the negociation with France, that the most affecting and impressive allusions were made to Mr. Fox. Lord Howick introduced the business of the day, by proposing a humble address to his majesty, expressive of such sentiments as the house may think fit to convey to the throne, after a careful review of the whole of the important question relative to the negociation.

"In rising to perform this duty" (said his lordship) "it is impossible for me not to experience many painful feelings: in the first place, regret, deep and lasting regret, for the failure of an effort sincerely directed to the restoration of peace to this country and to Europe, aggravated as that failure has been by the increased difficulties which the rapid succession of the most fatal events has since opposed to the restoration of peace. But, sir, connected with these feelings, peculiarly affecting to myself, is another event which it is impossible for me to pass by unnoticed; for it is impossible for me not to recollect by whom this business would have been detailed to this house, but for the dispensation of Providence. It is impossible for me to speak a word upon this occasion, either as to the effort itself, or the failure of it, without recollecting the great and irreparable loss the country has sustained in the death of that loved friend and instructor, without whose guidance and support I have no confidence in my own strength. It is impossible for me to forget what he was, and what I am. In detailing his efforts, and defending his conduct, I feel more than ever my own insufficiency for the performance of the task which he alone could adequately fulfil. If any thing can support me under such apprehensions, and upon such an occasion, it is the knowledge I have of those principles, as connected with this subject, which he held invariably until he ceased for ever to think of any thing in this life; of his

opinions as to the means to be used for the purpose of restoring peace and prosperity to this country. It is that knowledge which alone can enable me, or rather encourage me adequately to perform the duty which I owe to his memory, to this house, and to the public. Sir, if I could be confident of a general concurrence in this house on this subject, such as I believe to prevail abroad; or if I could even trust that this house would follow the example of the other house of parliament in the unanimity of its vote, my task would indeed be grateful and easy; but I know too well the severity of criticism which I have to expect from some quarters in this house, and I am too apprehensive of a radical difference of opinion, to entertain that confidence, or to think there will be any such unanimity of sentiment in this house, as to the result of the negociation. I shall therefore endeavour, by as clear and detailed an exposition as I can make of the facts, to show, that as, on the one hand, the king's government has, in no instance, committed the honour of the crown, by any manifestation or disposition to make improper concessions and sacrifices, so, on the other, it has neglected no means within its power to conclude such a peace as was consistent with the honour, prosperity, and interests of the country. I do not know whether, on the present occasion, it will be necessary to show to the house that, at the time of opening the late negociation, peace was in itself desirable. This, as a general proposition, is always true; peace is always desirable. The only true and legitimate end of war is a safe and honourable peace. But the question will be, whether we stood in a situation, at the moment of opening the negociation, that we could open it with a hope of obtaining such terms as, under all circumstances, the country had a right to expect."

After going through the correspondence between Mr. Fox and M. Talleyrand, and triumphantly proving that the former was altogether free from the slightest imputation, either on his integrity or his wisdom, his lordship proceeds:

"Here, then, I would ask, whether up to this period of the negociation there is any thing which any man can blame; any

thing which, were it to do. any man would choose to alter? A right hon. gentleman indeed did choose to taunt ministers on a former occasion with their simplicity and credulity, and affected to ridicule their diplomacy. But is this what the right hon. gentleman thinks deserving of ridicule? If it be true that ministers had claimed from the country the praise of good faith, and dignity in conduct, and of openness and simplicity in diplomatic language, Mr. Fox's correspondence with Talleyrand might be held forth as their title to that merit. If the people of this country had expected to see a noble simplicity of thought and expression, combined with the most dignified manliness of proceeding, distinguish their diplomacy, they would find the model in Mr. Fox's letters. If the people of England expected to see a commanding superiority of genius displayed in its diplomatic transactions; if they wished to see the honour of their country strongly contrasted with that of France, could they wish for a better instance than the correspondence of Mr. Fox with M. Talleyrand? (hear! hear!) I am glad to perceive this opinion ratified by that of this house, as I am convinced it must be by the judgment, not only of this country, but of all Europe and of posterity."

His lordship concluded his admirable speech in the following words:—after speaking of the advantages likely to result from the conduct and conclusion of the negociation, he adds,

"But, sir, I am at the same time far from encouraging very sanguine expectations, after all that has happened on the continent within these few years. The event is in the hands of 'Him who giveth the victory.' But one thing is clear, that the progress of Buonaparte has never yet been stopped by submission, and our only hope, therefore, is in resistance, as far as we can resist his ambitious projects. We have done what our honour and our duty called upon us to do. When this instrument of vengeance may be deprived of his terrors, I know not; but we may at least look to the honour and independence of this country, as secure against all his attacks; and while this country exists as an independent and an honourable nation, there will

still remain some hopes of restoring that political balance in Europe, which has for the present been overturned.—I should have now concluded, sir; but there are two points which, in justice to my noble friend (Lauderdale) and the public, I cannot entirely pass over. On the 30th of August, the negociation appeared to be at an end. On the 4th of September, however, my noble friend was invited to a conference. The note said to be delivered to him by the French, was, in fact, never delivered. If such a note had been received by him, and he had his passports with him, he ought not, and I trust he would not, have waited a moment longer in France, but would instantly have considered the negociation as at an end. But what is the object of a note which could be so easily disproved? This it is not easy to guess, but at all events sure I am that nothing could be more unjust. Now the other point is, the charge that a sudden change had taken place in the negociation after the political death of Mr. Fox. After he was dead, it was said that the war party had got the ascendancy, and that we wished to break off the negociation. That any change took place in consequence of that event I most positively deny. My noble friend (Lord Grenville) has too independent a mind to have been directed by any leader, and I can take upon myself to declare, that there never was the smallest difference of opinion on the subject in the cabinet. The last letter written by my deceased friend on this subject is that of the 26th of June. But then he all along cordially approved of all that was done, and in his last letter expresses his strong sense of the cavils of the French government, and directed that our negociator should proceed no farther, except the basis at first agreed upon should be recognized. In the last conversation which I myself had with him, which was on the 7th of September, the Sunday before his death, three great cardinal points were insisted upon by him: 1st, The security of our honour, in which Hanover was materially concerned; 2d, Russian connexion; 3d, Sicily. And the grounds on which the negociation broke off were in direct conformity with this opinion. On that occasion he told me, *that the ardent wishes of his mind were to consummate, before he died, two great works on which he had set his heart, and these were, the restoration of a solid and honourable peace, and the abolition of*

the slave trade. [A loud cry of hear! hear!] I have now, sir, endeavoured to show from these papers, that the first overture came from France; next, that the basis agreed upon for conducting the negociation was that of actual possession; and lastly, that no terms could be procured that could be accepted, with a view not only to our own honour and interests, but also with a view to the interests of Europe, and the maintenance of the most inviolable good faith, towards our allies."

Mr. Canning's speech, which followed Mr. Whitbread's in this debate, was an ironical attack on ministers, under the affected pretence of defending them against the attacks of Mr. Whitbread, who, though not their colleague, was for the most part their coadjutor, and identified with their politics. In the course of his observations, the right honourable gentleman returned once more to the carcass of the dead lion. Speaking of Mr. Fox's letter to the French minister, he remarked: "I still think the letter, in its whole style and tenour, in conception and in taste, altogether unworthy of the great man who was the writer of it, and so unlike him, so wholly unlike every thing else of his writing which appears in the papers upon the table, that when I heard the noble lord speak of the interpolations which the enemy had audaciously inserted in the publication of the Moniteur, I profess I fully expected to find this letter one of them. I was disappointed at finding it among our own official papers, unaltered, and still attributed to Mr. Fox. I was no less disappointed at not finding something else, which I understood the noble lord to have promised: but I suppose I must have misunderstood him. I did, however, understand him to say, that when the official correspondence came to be pub-

lished, we should find that Mr. Fox had rejected with disdain those exclusive compliments to himself, the object of which is obviously, not so much to exalt him, as to vilify all the ministers who had gone before him. I find nothing like it. I wish I did. I retain my opinion as to what ought to have been an English minister's conduct in this respect."

This speech is long, and is remarkable for its detail and special pleading. With such a thorn in their side, we do not wonder at the ironical compliment which Lord Castlereagh paid to the ministers, that "they were on a bed of roses." The conclusion is distinguished for its force and severity.

"I have indeed heard it said, that in making such observations as I have taken the liberty to make, in pointing out the errors of ministers, in dwelling upon what (if wrong at all) are represented as merely slips in the declaration, persons who have taken that part have been guilty of petty cavilling, and have exposed the weakness of their own cause. Cause? What cause? I have no cause in this business, but the cause of my country. I know not how I can better serve that than by inquiring into the way in which it has been managed by those who have had the conduct of it; and if it has in any part been misconducted, it is better that we should find out the fault ourselves than leave it to the detection and comments of the enemy.—But it must indeed be a mismanagement beyond any thing that I have dreamt of imputing to ministers, that could so far change the respective positions of us and our enemy, as to put him wholly in the right, and us in the wrong. Pity it is, if, in any one particular, appearances have been suffered to be against us. It is for that reason that the *slips* in the declaration (if such they be) are to be deeply regretted and deplored.—It is deeply to be regretted, that an assertion should have gone forth to the world, in the sacred name of his majesty, which cannot be substantiated by facts. It is deeply to be regretted that the misconception (to give it no harsher name) from which this false assertion

flowed, should have pervaded so large a portion of the negociation, should have exhausted so much fruitless reasoning, and wasted so much precious time, and led to the omission or misuse of opportunities which it may be impossible to retrieve. And it is subject, not of barren regret only, but of prospective anxiety and of exhortation to ministers, that they should revert as quickly as possible to the pursuit of those objects, and that policy, from which they have been so unfortunately and unaccountably led astray; and should seek to recover those advantages which in the hopeless pursuit of unattainable peace they were unavoidably tempted to abandon—the advantages of a cordial co-operation with all the remaining powers of the continent.—Sir, I understand the amendment of the hon. gentleman (Mr. Whitbread) has been disposed of. It is hardly necessary to say, that my vote is given most cordially against it. I cannot agree with him, that such a peace appears to have been within our reach, as would alone justify his insinuation, that a favourable opportunity has been thrown away. I do not wonder indeed at his indignation, at finding himself left alone in opinions which he has held for so many years in common with many of those who sit around him. Consistently with those opinions, the hon. gentleman had a right to press such an amendment, and to expect a very different reception of it. I certainly rejoice in that change of opinion which leaves him without support; though, perhaps, I, like him, may be surprised at it. But I am still more surprised that, having determined to make no peace but one of a very different character from that with which the hon. gentleman would have been satisfied, his honourable friends should have been eight months in making the discovery, that a peace of a higher character was not to be obtained.—With respect to the address itself, I should be very loth indeed upon any slight ground to break in upon that unanimity which is so desirable in a vote which is to assure his majesty of the support of his people; and which may be considered as addressed, in a certain degree, to the enemy and to Europe. My only difficulty arises from those general expressions of lamentation at the issue of the negociation, in which I cannot concur, without at least explaining and qualifying my concurrence. Regret or satisfaction at any event depends, in a great degree, upon comparison. We compare what we have missed, with what

remains to us instead of it; and it is thus, in certain cases, very possible to rejoice at having missed what was positively a good, or to regret what would have been a positive evil.—Thus war is undoubtedly *per se* a great calamity, and peace an inestimable blessing; but war may yet be felt to be preferable to an inglorious and insecure peace. On the other hand, an inglorious and insecure peace is to be deprecated as an evil; yet it is possible that a war may be so conducted as to render even such a peace an object of desire. Ministers have so contrived as to make this a question of no small doubt and perplexity. They make the choice between peace and war difficult, or, perhaps, almost indifferent. When I peruse their negociations, and see to what sort of a peace alone they could have led, with what chance of security, with what hope of permanence, I am inclined to congratulate myself on the escape from such a peace to a continuance of the war: but on the other hand, when I observe what sort of a war the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Wyndham) carries on, I can scarce refrain from casting back a wishful look at the negociation. If the war were conducted with that ability which we had a right to expect from the character which the present administration gave of themselves, or suffered to be given of them by those nearest in their confidence, and from the unsparing censure and contempt which they lavished on the exertions of their predecessors in office; if it were conducted with that vigour which the country has a right to demand at their hands, trusting them, as it does, with all its means, and seconding them with all its zeal and exertion; if any blow had been struck against the enemy in the course of the year during which these ministers have wielded the whole strength of the empire; if every effort had been made, or even every disposition manifested, to give heart and hope to the nations of the continent—so that out of such a war might arise the promise of an honourable, a secure, and a permanent peace; unquestionably, in that situation of things, the rupture of the late negociation would be matter of unqualified joy, and I could not bring myself to concur in lamenting it. But if the war that is to come is to be the counterpart of that which we have hitherto witnessed since the accession of the present administration; if the events and exertions of the last ten months are to be taken as the sample and the measure of our activity and

achievements; if, while the enemy insultingly tell us, at every step of the negociation, 'beaucoup se prepare,' and telling us so, uniformly keep their word—on our part such opportunities are to be thrown away as have existed for the last three months, and as exist still, had we the spirit to take advantage of them; if Buonaparte may traverse the continent of Europe to its furthest extremities, and drain France of her last man, relying as fearlessly and as securely upon our supineness, our sloth, and our despondency, as he could have done upon our faithful observance of the stipulations of the most advantageous treaty of peace; and, lastly, if that disheartening maxim, to which I have already had occasion to refer with sorrow and shame, that maxim which was so deeply impressed upon the mind of the government, even so long ago as the beginning of the negociation, that it overflowed in confidential communication to France herself; the maxim that there is nothing so chimerical as any new project of continental confederacy against France; if that, I say, still prevails, and prevails with all the additional weight which it may have acquired from the unfortunate events which have taken place since it was first promulgated; then, indeed, seeing little to expect from such a war, conducted on such principles, under such auspices, and with no better hopes in the minds of those who have the charge of it, I can, in that sense, join in expressing my regret at the failure of the negociation; and with that explanation I am willing to vote for the address as it stands."

From this period to March, Mr. Canning appears but twice in the Parliamentary Reports. The one is a short speech on the petition respecting the Hampshire election *; and the other is equally brief on the freehold estate bill. In the one, he is severe and personal against the character of ministers as reformers; and in the other he has a hit at the French

* The new parliament, the former having died a natural death, assembled on the 15th of December. The Hampshire petition arose out of the election occasioned by the dissolution.

revolution. The following is an extract from that on the Hampshire election petition.

"Mr. Canning hoped that the right hon. gentleman who spoke last on the other side, would permit him to qualify his observation, that nothing was so extraordinary as a motion of this kind, proceeding from the quarter in which it originated, by telling him that it was equally extraordinary that such a motion should meet with such a reception in the quarter in which it was opposed. In the earlier part of his parliamentary life, he remembered motions of parliamentary reform strongly urged by the right hon. gentleman and those about him. It was fortunate for the country that those gentlemen were now placed in a situation in which their influence upon the councils of the sovereign, and the share they had in directing the measures of parliament gave them an opportunity of carrying into effect their ideas upon this subject. The public would now know what were the hon. gentleman's improved and correct ideas with respect to the object for which they clamoured so loudly before. The whole of the parliamentary reform they meant to carry into effect was, the unlimited and barefaced interposition of that government influence, the exertion of which they, without foundation, imputed to other governments as the worst of crimes. It was argued by the hon. gentleman that because he and his friends had thought proper on former occasions to prefer groundless complaints of this nature, they might now in reality retort the evil tenfold; and this was the way the hon. gentleman and his friends redeemed their pledges of parliamentary reform. The hon. gentleman told the house, that it ought to see no ground of suspicion in a letter written by the secretary of the treasury to the head of a principal department of the public service, a department having greater influence in Hampshire than in any other county, to use his influence in favour of a particular candidate. He would not himself say that such a letter was a ground for pronouncing the writer and his principals guilty. But he thought the house would hardly be of opinion that there was not in it strong ground for suspicion and for inquiry. He professed the highest respect for the hon. gentleman whose name was coupled with the charge preferred to the petition. He had never heard the hon. gentleman's name mentioned other-

wise than with respect, except in the petition. He had never witnessed a more honourable, a more candid, or a more affecting appeal to the sense of the house than the honourable gentleman had made. There was no part of that appeal which was not creditable to the hon. gentleman as an individual. Any complaint that his interposition in the election might be liable to, could attach only to his official capacity. Nothing was more true than that the persons composing a government were not disqualified from exerting their rights as individuals, in common with every other subject; but they should exert them with caution, so that it should always appear to be the individual right they exerted, and not the power and influence of the government. The hon. gentleman might have written to his private connexions and dependents, with all possible zeal and ardour to exert themselves to promote the election of his friends. But the ground of complaint was, that the letter was addressed, not by Mr. Fremantle, a gentleman of property, and a freeholder of Hampshire, to general Hewitt, a person of private connexion in that county, but from Mr. Fremantle, secretary of the treasury, to general Hewitt, head of the barrack department, claiming the exertions of his influence through all the ramifications, connexions, and dependencies of that department. It could not justly be assumed that this was the only instance of the undue interposition of government in this election. The expression of his hon. friend, 'Ex uno disce omnes,' was in itself an assurance that there were many similar instances; and the petition stated this one only as a specimen of a multitude of other facts which were to be brought forward, and which the petitioners were ready to prove. It was not for him to say how far the allegations of the petition would be made out; but, as a member of parliament, he would say, that the petitioners having stated such facts, and having declared themselves ready to prove them, it would require much stronger reasons than he had heard, to justify the dismissal of the petition without proper attention and respect."

On the freehold bill, in reply to the solicitor-general, Mr. Canning concludes his speech in the following style of levity, casting an air of ridicule upon reform, and all reformers:

"As to the general doctrine of the adaptation of laws to the supposed state of the country, it would open a door for all reformation. In the reign of the philosophers of France, there was nothing great or venerable in antiquity that was not attacked before the great revolution which rendered these changes odious to all the world. If we were to look generally at the fitness of things, he would undertake, with half the ingenuity of the hon. and learned gentleman, to prove to the conviction of speculative men, and many others, that there was nothing that had been hitherto held venerable in our law, that did not require reformation. He could prove that the right of primogeniture ought to be abolished, and that it was improper to leave almost the whole to lazy drones of elder brothers, and leave the rest to make their way in the world as they could. If you begin with these notions, there was no end to them. He had therefore his doubts as to the propriety of passing this law, and these doubts were not removed. He would not, however, oppose the second reading, because he wished to observe what amendments might be made in it, but he rather thought that he must be under the necessity of opposing its ultimate success."

We have intimated that with the heads of the Grenville administration the Catholic question was not a subject of secondary policy, but of paramount and even indispensable importance; and viewing, as they did, the removal of certain restrictions from the Roman Catholics as at that time essential to the safety of the empire, we are not to be surprised that it became a matter of discussion in the cabinet, and that it was introduced by them into parliament. Viscount Sidmouth was totally opposed to the renewal of the subject, and threatened his resignation if it were not abandoned. Lord Grenville and viscount Howick, however, had some interviews with his majesty on the subject, the result of which was, that the question was not then agitated. It was at length partially revived by a bill for the introduction of catholics into the army and navy. This measure greatly dis-

pleased the king. His ministers persisted in what they deemed the discharge of their duty; and that no part of the onus should rest on them, should the consequences of their failure prove as disastrous as they reasonably apprehended, they did not resign, but suffered themselves to be dismissed. If Ireland had been lost at that critical juncture, England would have been dragged down in the gulf of her ruin; and, without a country, we should have been the miserable vassals of France.

This administration has been treated with unmeasured severity. Its reign was short; and it had to take up a system of policy repugnant to all its principles of government, and to modify, in order at length to supersede, what it could not immediately remove. The "pilot that weathered the storm" had left them a leaky vessel, a discontented crew, a turbulent sea, and a lowering sky. His opponents, indeed, have not scrupled to say that he was the demon that raised the storm; and that if he had not precipitated a war in the first instance with the republic of France, that had he adopted the policy recommended to him by his illustrious rival, the civilized world would not have been shaken by the armies of that republic, which were the sole creation of its enemies; and that the military despotism which ravaged Europe, and degraded France, would have been entirely unknown. It is certain that the warning voice of Mr. Fox was early raised against the injustice and the impolicy of the war; and that his prophetic sagacity foretold what would be the fearful result. Fain would he have restrained his country from partaking of the guilt of raising France to be the scourge of Europe. It was

he who said, long before the event happened, " that the insane conduct of the coalesced nations would establish a military power in the heart of Europe, which would make all the thrones on the continent to tremble, and probably convulse the whole civilized world." He saw the faults, and foretold the failure, of those plans which, at the time, were considered as the grandest efforts of political wisdom. But his fate was like that of the fabled Cassandra: he prophesied truth without being believed. Had he been earlier called to the councils of his sovereign, it would have been seen that his capacious mind was equal to the most difficult undertaking; and had he lived, with the free and uncontrolled exercise of his power, following out the dictates of a sound and comprehensive policy, he would have been great in war, or glorious in peace. Of this distinguished man we may at least affirm, that his principles were in the largest sense the grand elements of human and social happiness. While sincerely attached to the monarchy, he was pre-eminently the man of the people. He was neither a demagogue nor a parasite. He was the same when the idol of the people and when the object of their detestation. Popular odium is the ordeal of patriotism. If it outlive this test, none will question its purity. A man may be justly suspected who strenuously supports the cause favourable to his interest, his ambition, or his vanity; but if he be firm, in opposition to all and each of these, he deserves the credit of virtue and magnanimity. Mr. Fox, frowned upon and insulted by the party in power, deserted by his friends, and execrated by the populace, stands unmoved, though alone. His was not a mind to be in-

timidated. Personal feelings and personal safety were nothing in his estimation, when the public good demanded the sacrifice of either or of both. He saw his contemporaries turn, and turn again; but he was not to be bought. "The popular odium," says the historian, "incurred in the year 1792, by the leaders of opposition, particularly by Mr. Fox, in consequence of their generous endeavours to rescue their country from the gulf of ruin into which it was, with such blind and rash precipitancy, about to plunge, will appear to posterity scarcely credible." And on his return to power, he carried to the cabinet and the senate the views he had ever entertained. He was no political Proteus. He never deserted his friends, nor persecuted his enemies. He neither flattered the sovereign nor the people. He never sacrificed the prerogative of the one, nor compromised the rights of the other. The administration which he honoured with his confidence, and to which he devoted the last days of his invaluable life, regarded him with a reverence bordering on idolatry. It is true neither he nor they were the fit successors of Mr. Pitt. The time for a total change of measures had not arrived. Peace was not within their power; and for war they had to look only to exhausted resources, or to increase the burdens of the people; add to which, they were conscientiously pledged to certain principles of government, to which they were resolved to adhere. They were not men of shifts and expedients. One great measure appeared to them indispensable, both as a question of right and of necessity, which they would not abandon; and, in their zeal to carry it, they were dismissed from the councils of their sovereign. To

the few bigots who look upon the catholic question as a religious question, and who really think that emancipation would be opening the door for popery to return, with another martyrology in its train, we have nothing to say. To statesmen of *easy virtue*, such as Sheridan, who, in allusion to the conduct of his friends, remarked, "I have often heard of men running their heads against a stone wall, but I never heard before of any persons building a wall on purpose to run their heads against," we have no explanations to offer, or arguments to urge. But to the thoughtful part of the community, who believe that principle is something, but who may, on *political* grounds, be disposed to blame the Grenville administration for obtruding upon the monarch a subject to which they well knew he felt an unconquerable repugnance, we shall not deem it a waste of words to state a few *constitutional* doctrines.

The ministers, and not the monarch, are responsible for the measures of every government. It is a sacred maxim of the constitution that the king can do no wrong. While this maxim, however, is the guardian of the throne, and places it above censure or control, it is balanced by another, which equally protects the country against the tyranny which would subvert its liberties, or the folly which would endanger its security. It is this: that the monarch never acts without the advice of his council, and that every act of government, always involving a responsibility proportioned to its magnitude, is considered not his, but theirs. Thus, in the affairs of state, the constitution of England does not recognise a private will in its highest functionary. In the exercise of his preroga-

tive, a king of Great Britain selects or dismisses the servants of the crown, summons, prorogues, and dissolves parliaments at his pleasure; but his individual opinions and prejudices ought to have no consideration in the government, only so far as they are adopted by his ministers; and nothing, in our view, can be more impolitic, disloyal, and unconstitutional, than an attempt to circumscribe the range of ministerial policy by pleading the personal interference of the sovereign. Whatever parliament has a right to discuss, ministers have a right to propose; and if either refuse to bring forward, and to consider, any great question, merely because it is unpalatable to the reigning monarch, they violate a fundamental principle of the constitution, and endanger the throne while they flatter the king.

But as kings are only men, and, either from conscientious firmness or obstinate self-will, and unmindful of the just limits of their prerogative, may proscribe the introduction of certain measures into parliament, which, in the view of the cabinet, are of vital importance—what, under such circumstances, would be the duty of the administration? Certainly not to compromise the interests of the country. What, then, are they to force upon their royal master what they know he is so unwilling to entertain? Certainly not. They are to counsel and to advise; and if in this they fail, the path they ought to pursue is open before them: it is their duty to resign. But to retain their places and responsibility, when they are paralyzed in the execution of their plans for securing the public safety, would be hazardous to themselves, as well as injurious to the nation. The duty of a privy-

counsellor, as stated by Lord Coke, requires him to advise "generally in all things that may be to the king's honour and behoof, and to the good of his realms, lordships, and subjects, without partiality or exceptions of persons, not leaving or eschewing so to do, for affection, love, meed, doubt, or dread of any person or persons." It is contrary to the first duties of the confidential servants of the crown to restrain themselves by any pledge, expressed or implied, from offering to the king any advice which the course of circumstances may render necessary for the welfare and security of any part of the empire. Such was the constitutional language of Mr. Brand, when he brought before parliament the subject of that change in the administration of which we are now treating. His doctrine, to be sure, is regarded with something very like horror by certain politicians, who, when it suits their convenience, affect not only an extraordinary degree of loyalty to the throne, but of personal attachment to the monarch; and they ask, with apparent consternation that is really amusing, what is to become of the king, should his conscientious scruples on a measure deemed by his servants absolutely necessary to the safety of the country compel these servants to resign their offices, should no successors be found but such as are determined to adhere to the same policy? If it be the duty of all to resign, or to refuse to accept of office, unless they can carry this indispensable point, is the king to be left without ministers? and is he, in this manner, to be driven to act against his own conscience? Appalling as such an alternative may appear, we may perhaps be permitted to ask, in our turn, what better defence is there

against the machinations of a wicked, or the errors of a weak monarch, than the impossibility of finding a minister who will lend himself to vice and folly? Every English monarch in such a predicament would sacrifice his opinions and views to such a clear expression of the public will; and it is one method in which the constitution aims at bringing about such a sacrifice. It may seem to some extremely shocking, that the ruler of a state should be forced to give up his object, when the natural love of place and power will tempt no one to assist him in its attainment. But those who are acquainted with the principles of human nature, and the tendency of power to generate oppression, will rejoice when the throne is protected by a force like this—it is force without injury, and therefore without blame. Peter Plymley, who has maintained the positions here assumed with irresistible cogency, exclaims "I am not to be beat out of these obvious reasonings, and ancient constitutional provisions, by the term conscience. There is no fantasy, however wild, that a man may not persuade himself that he cherishes from motives of conscience: eternal war against impious France, or rebellious America, or catholic Spain may, in times to come, be scruples of conscience." And to his brethren, the clergy, he puts the truly harrowing suggestion, enough to frighten all their conscience out of them: "one English monarch may, from scruples of conscience, wish to abolish every trait of religious persecution; another monarch may deem it his absolute and indispensable duty to make a slight provision for dissenters out of the revenues of the church of England." We much fear, that a royal conscience, of such a complexion, would

obtain little reverence from the wearers of aprons and mitres—we are not quite sure that it would even be tolerated, and we are apprehensive, that the most strenuous opposers of our doctrines would lower their tone of hostility, having discovered, that cases may be imagined where it would be the duty of the best and most loyal subjects to oppose the conscientious scruples of their sovereign, taking due care, however, that their actions were constitutional, and their modes respectful.

We know of no surer way of subverting the British constitution than by establishing the principle, that the personal conscience of the monarch ought to be the ultimate law of the state. It would be a virtual annihilation of the two other branches of the legislature. It would establish an absolute despotism. A wicked monarch would make it subservient to every purpose of selfishness and ambition; and a weak one would be perpetually liable to be swayed by the bigotry, prejudice, and avarice of a dominant priesthood. A wise one would never plead his conscience as a bar against the liberties of any of his subjects, and, as he is amenable to no earthly tribunal for his actions, and only to that of heaven for his *individual* and not his *official* conduct, which belongs not to him but to that government which takes the whole weight of his responsibility, he will never mix up his conscience with the measures of the state; he will feel that, as a sovereign, his only duty is to govern the people through the wisdom of his parliament, and to exercise his authority, not according to the dictates of his private judgment, but according to the counsels of his constitutional advisers. The unhappy Charles committed a fatal error by endeavouring to force upon

the nation what he called the incommunicable jewel, his conscience, which, by a logic peculiarly his own, he accused them of attempting to wrest from him. Milton's reply makes an admirable distinction, which, we trust, will be ever familiar to the future monarchs of Great Britain. "We complain," said this noblest advocate of freedom, "because his conscience was not incommunicable, because he wished to make it a universal conscience, the whole kingdom's conscience. Thus what he seems to fear, lest we should ravish from him, is our chief complaint that he obtruded upon us. We never forced him to part with his conscience, but it was he that would have forced us to part with ours."

Those who, during the latter part of the last reign, pursued this reasoning, and who dared boldly thus to uphold the constitution, totally regardless of individual feelings and interests, were treated by their opponents with the basest injustice. It was insinuated, that they were disloyal to the reigning sovereign, indifferent to the protestant succession, and secret enemies of monarchy itself. These vile attempts to bring down opprobrium upon the principles, which placed the House of Hanover upon the throne of these realms, were regarded by the men they were intended to discredit with the contempt they deserved. The facetious writer already quoted answered invective with ridicule, and blunted the edge of calumny by the keenness of satire. "Do not imagine," says he, "by these observations that I am not loyal; without joining in the common cant of the best of kings, I respect the king most sincerely as a good man. His religion is better than the religion of Mr. Perceval,

his old morality very superior to the old morality of Mr. Canning, and I am quite certain he has a safer understanding than both of them put together. Loyalty, within the bounds of reason and moderation, is one of the great instruments of English happiness; but the love of the king may easily become more strong than the love of the kingdom, and we may lose sight of the public welfare in our exaggerated admiration of him, who is appointed to reign only for its promotion and support. 'God save the king,' you say, warms your heart like the sound of a trumpet. I cannot make use of so violent a metaphor, but I am delighted to hear it, when it is the cry of genuine affection: I am delighted to hear it, when they hail not only the individual man, but the outward and living sign of all English blessings. These are noble feelings, and the heart of every good man must go with them; but 'God save the king,' in these times, too often means, God save my pension and my place; God give my sisters an allowance out of the privy purse; make me clerk of the irons; let me survey the meltings, let me live upon the fruits of other men's industry, and fatten upon the plunder of the public."

That the Grenville administration entertained these constitutional opinions, and that, in reference to the catholic question, they felt that whoever retained his situation in the ministry, while the incapacities of the catholics continued, was the advocate of those incapacities, to whom, and to whom alone, the country ought to look for responsibility, we cannot have any rational doubt; and that this same administration, in the then state of the country, deemed the measure, for which they nobly sacrificed their power, to be of in-

dispensable importance, we can have as little reason to question. Indeed they must have been governed by a blind infatuation if they had not. That the chapter of accidents turned up in favour of their successors, and that Ireland was not wrested from the empire during the appalling successes of Buonaparte, is not to be ascribed either to the wisdom or vigour of their councils, but solely to the interposition of divine Providence. At the close of the year 1806, on the conciliation of Ireland the very existence of the empire seemed to depend. We wanted, at that awful crisis, all the physical and moral energy of the three kingdoms; and the soundest policy dictated that the proscribed millions of Ireland should be heartily enlisted in the cause of the civilized world. What were the convictions of the administration may be learnt by the following extract, from the letters of their witty and powerful advocate, written, however, during the mismanagement and imbecility of the men to whom they were compelled to give place. "You ask me if I think it possible for this country to survive the recent misfortunes of Europe? I answer you, without the slightest degree of hesitation, that if Buonaparte lives, and a great deal is not immediately done for the conciliation of the catholics, it does seem to me absolutely impossible but that we must perish; and take this with you, that we shall perish without exciting the slightest feeling of present or future compassion, but fall amidst the hootings and revilings of Europe, as a nation of blockheads, methodists, and old women. If there were any great scenery, any heroic feelings, any blaze of ancient virtue, any exalted death, any termination of England that would

ever be remembered, ever honoured in that western world, where liberty is now retiring, conquest would be more tolerable, and ruin more sweet; but it is doubly miserable to become slaves abroad, because we would be tyrants at home; to persecute when we are contending against persecution; and to perish because we have raised up worse enemies within from our own bigotry, than we are exposed to without from the unprincipled ambition of France. It is, indeed, a most silly and afflicting spectacle to rage at such a moment against our own kindred and our own blood; to tell them they cannot be honourable in war, because they are conscientious in religion; to stipulate (at the very moment when we should buy their hearts and hands at any price) that they must hold up the right hand in prayer, and not the left, and adore our common God, by turning to the east, rather than to the west.

"What is it the catholics ask of you? Do not exclude us from the honours and emoluments of the state, because we worship God in one way, and you worship him in another; in a period of the deepest peace, and the fattest prosperity, this would be a fair request; it should be granted, if Lord Hawkesbury had reached Paris, if Mr. Canning's interpreter* had

* Mr. Canning's conduct in parliament at the period referred to, when he was a member of the government, relative to the catholic claims, to which he was known to be favourable, though he zealously joined the adversaries of the measure, exposed him to the bitterest censures. Peter Plymley was among the severest of his assailants; and speaking of this interpreter of Mr. Canning, whom we forbear to name, he calls him "that sinuous parasite who is always grinning at his heels. Nature descends down to infinite smallness. Mr. Canning has his parasites, and

threatened the senate in an opening speech, or Mr. Perceval explained to them the improvements he meant to introduce into the catholic religion; but to deny the Irish this justice now, in the present state of Europe, and in the summer months, just as the season for destroying kingdoms is coming on, is (brother Abraham), whatever you may think of it, little short of positive insanity.

"Here is a frigate attacked by a corsair of immense strength and size; rigging cut, masts in danger of coming by the board, four foot water in the hold, men dropping off very fast; in this dreadful situation, how do you think the captain acts (whose name shall be Perceval)? He calls all hands upon deck; talks to them of king, country, glory, sweethearts, gin, French prison, wooden shoes, old England, and hearts of oak; they give three cheers, rush to their guns, and after a tremendous conflict, succeed in beating off the enemy. Not a syllable of all this; this is not the manner in which the honourable commander goes to work; the first thing he does is to secure twenty or thirty of his prime sailors who happen to be catholics, to clap them in irons, and set over them a guard of as many protestants; having taken this admirable method of defending himself against his infidel opponents, he goes upon deck, reminds the sailors in a very bitter harangue, that they are of different reli-

if you take a large buzzing blue-bottle fly, and look at it in a microscope, you may see twenty or thirty little ugly insects crawling about it, which doubtless think their fly to be the bluest, grandest, merriest, most important animal in the universe, and are convinced the world would be at an end if it ceased to buzz." —Plymley's Letters, p. 36, eleventh edition, 1808.

gions; exhorts the episcopal gunner not to trust to the presbyterian quarter-master; issues positive orders that the catholics should be fired at upon the first appearance of discontent; rushes through blood and brains, examining his men in the catechism and thirty-nine articles; and positively forbids every one to spunge or ram, who has not taken the sacrament according to the church of England. Was it right to take out a captain, made of excellent British stuff, and to put in such a man as this? Is not he more like a parson, or a talking lawyer, than a thorough-bred seaman? and built as she is of heart of oak, and admirably manned, is it possible with such a captain to save this ship from going to the bottom?"

"Believe me," adds this writer, "you talk folly when you speak of suppressing the catholic question. I wish to God the case admitted of such a remedy; bad as it is, it does not admit of it. If the wants of the catholics are not heard in the manly tones of Lord Grenville, or the servile drawl of Lord Castlereagh, they will be heard ere long in the madness of mobs, and the conflicts of armed men."

Such were the apprehensions forced upon the minds of the Grenville administration, and with the magnanimity of enlightened patriotism, they resolved to save their country, or perish in the attempt. As a ministry, their fate was the latter alternative; and it is remarkable, that the men who succeeded them, though they determined to leave Ireland to its fate, felt the same apprehensions even to a degree of terror; for what but a panic could have induced them to meditate the aggression upon Copenhagen, which must ever remain as a foul blot upon our national character?

It is true the danger so much dreaded was not realised; but no thanks to them. The insane ambition of the enemy destroyed his own gigantic projects; and Ireland escaped being made a province of France; but what has she proved as an integral part of the British dominions? and what is she likely to prove unless a wise administration heal her divisions, and deliver her from rebellion and blood? What might she have been at this moment, had her redemption commenced at the auspicious era which has thus rapidly passed under our review? One great and glorious benefit, however, this administration conferred upon their country and the human race; they abolished the traffic in blood; they proclaimed, amidst the joyous acclamations of millions, the freedom of Africa. The concluding act of their brief reign was the law which announced, that, as far as Great Britain was concerned, the trade in men should cease for ever. Their opponents, rendered proud and insolent by their defeat, exulted over their fall; and Mr. Canning was not ashamed to lampoon them in the following strains. These lines reflect indelible disgrace upon the statesman and the man. They are utterly unworthy of his splendid talents, and cast a deep and withering shade over his integrity.

ALL THE TALENTS.

When the broad-bottom'd Junta, with reason at strife,
Resign'd, with a sigh, its political life;
When converted to Rome, and of honesty tired,
They gave back to the Devil the soul he inspired;

The Demon of Faction, that over them hung,
In accents of horror their epitaph sung;

While Pride and Venality join'd in the stave,
And canting Democracy wept at the grave.

" Here lies in the tomb that we hollow'd for Pitt,
Consistence of Grenville, of Temple the wit;
Of Sidmouth the firmness, the temper of Grey,
And Treasurer Sheridan's promise to pay.

" Here Petty's finance, from the evils to come,
With Fitzpatrick's sobriety, creeps to the tomb;
And Chancellor Ego, now left in the lurch,
Neither dines with the Jordan, nor whines for the church.

" Then huzza for the Party that here is at rest,
By the fools of a faction regretted and blest;
Though they sleep with the Devil, yet theirs is the hope,
On the downfall of Britain to rise with the Pope."

THE NEW-OLD OPPOSITION.

It is said, the Great Men, who are seized with the pouts,
At their suddenly alter'd condition;
Who so late were the Ins, and so soon were the Outs,
Have decreed a severe Opposition.

Nor will it be wonder'd at, greatly, if those
Who 're deprived of unmerited treasures,
As of old, should determine the *Men* to oppose,
Though their consciences sanction the *Measures*.

Such threats are, by Britons, too well understood
To create any just apprehensions;
Nor can they, who, in power, accomplish'd no good,
Now appal us by *evil intentions*.

CHAPTER VI.

The New Ministry—Mr. Canning Secretary for Foreign Affairs —The imputed Pledge—The Catholic Question certainly excluded from the Cabinet—The Opposition—Mr. Canning's Speeches—Attacks on Mr. Canning in Parliament—From the Press—Peter Plymley—His Letters published to strengthen the Opposition in the New Parliament—The Bombardment of Copenhagen, and the Seizure of the Danish Fleet—His elaborate and eloquent Speech on that Occasion—The immediate Consequences of this Speech in Parliament—Dr. Duigenan's Appointment as Privy Counsellor—Speeches—Official Answers of Mr. Canning, as Foreign Secretary, relating to the Overture for Peace, and in Reply to the Russian Ambassador on the Subject of the Peninsular War—Speeches—Duel with Lord Castlereagh—Resignation.

THE sudden dissolution of the ministry, the general aspect of political affairs in Europe, and the party-spirit and contentions at home, rendered the close of this session of parliament a memorable æra. In his *History of the Peninsular War*, Dr. Southey observes: "The situation of England in the year 1807 was more extraordinary than any that is exhibited in the history of former times. After a war which, with the short interval of the peace of Amiens, had continued fifteen years, and at the commencement of which all Europe had been leagued with her against revolutionary France, her last reliance upon the continental governments had failed; most of her former allies were leagued against her; and it was manifest that the few states which still preserved a semblance of neutrality would soon, in like manner, be compelled into a confederacy with France. The French

army, and the English navy, two more tremendous powers than old times had ever seen, were opposed to each other, without the possibility of coming in conflict. Masters as the French were on the continent, all thoughts of attacking them by land were at an end; and neither they nor their allies dared show their flag upon the sea. England could not in any way lessen the power of France, neither could France subdue, nor in any way weaken, England. The threat of invasion had been laid aside: it had been seriously intended by Buonaparte; but the spirit with which the English people flew to arms intimidated him, and his gun-boats were left to rot in the harbours where, with so much cost and care, they had been collected. Secured against any such evil by our fleets, and still more by our internal strength, we were carrying on the war equally without fear and without hope.

"The state of our home politics was not less remarkable. For the first time, Great Britain was under an administration without a name. Its ostensible head, the Duke of Portland, never appeared in parliament, and was neither spoken of, nor thought of, by the public. He deserves, however, an honourable memorial in British history, for having accepted office in a time of peculiar and extreme difficulty, and thereby enabled the king to form a ministry, *whose opinions were in unison with his own principles and feelings*, and with the wishes and true interests of his people. The other ministers held their places less by their own strength than by the *weakness* of their opponents; for of all administrations, that to which they had succeeded had been the most *unpopular*. From their want of influence in the country, the *powerful*

families being mostly with the opposition, it was thought that they depended too much upon the personal favour of the sovereign, and were more *literally the king's servants* than is consistent with the spirit of the constitution. Their talents had not been put fairly to the proof, and the nation had not as yet learned to appreciate the cool, clear judgment of Lord Hawkesbury, the finished oratory of Mr. Canning, and the activity and intrepidity of Mr. Perceval, always ready and always right-minded. While Pitt and Fox were living, every man believed either in the one or in the other. One party was perfectly satisfied that all the measures of the minister were right; and the other as confidently expected that, notwithstanding the evil consequences of his mispolicy and his misfortunes, the country was to be saved as soon as their political redeemer came into power. From this comfortable state, wherein faith supplied the place of reason, they were disturbed by the death of both their leaders, neither of whom left a successor, but both exaggerated reputations. It became the general complaint, that there was no man, or set of men, in whom the nation had any confidence. Some persons apprehended from this a dangerous indifference in the public toward parliament itself. Others hoped that as the people were weary of factious debates, parliament would no longer be made a theatre of faction, but that measures would be discussed with a view to the common weal, and no longer solely with reference to the party by which they were brought forward."

The historian of the Peninsular War no doubt intended to compliment the new ministers, and to vent, as usual, his spleen against his former associates in politics; yet it is amusing to see the eulogy which he

evidently designed for the one party resting upon the other, and the censure recoiling from its selected victims back upon its partial and prejudiced author. It seems that the administration which was most consonant to the views of the king, and most agreeable to the wishes of the people, was a headless body, the members of which held their places less by their own strength than by the weakness of their opponents; yet these opponents were in alliance with the most powerful families in the country. They were the king's friends, but without influence; and they were so literally the servants of their royal master, that to his prejudices and feelings they sacrificed the paramount interests of the constitution. This is pretty well, as applied to the sagacious Hawkesbury, the eloquent Canning, and the right-minded Perceval. Can higher praise be pronounced on any set of men, than that they were unpopular with a public whose favourites were entitled to such commendations?

The new administration was no sooner formed than announced. The Duke of Portland, as first lord of the treasury; Lord Hawkesbury, secretary of state for the home, Mr. Canning for the foreign, and Viscount Castlereagh for the colonial department; and Mr. Perceval chancellor of the exchequer: Lord Eldon resumed the seals. With all the influence of a new parliament, collected under the auspices of a whig administration composed of the first families in the empire; a parliament which had commenced its labours only on the preceding December; and all the original leaders of which were now formidably ranged on the side of opposition, Mr. Canning and his colleagues were now called to contend. The indignation of the dismissed ministers and their friends was irre-

pressible. They beheld themselves superseded by men, who, without interest or power in the country, were suddenly summoned to be its rulers; and who, by a tacit compact at least, if not a direct and unequivocal pledge, had surrendered to the personal feelings of the sovereign their right to recommend or to discuss a question of vital importance to the state. These too were the individuals who had acted with Mr. Pitt, and participated in his views on this very subject—views diametrically opposite to those which they now acknowledged. Mr. Perceval they regarded as a mere lawyer, whom accident made a minister, but whom nature never designed for a statesman. Lord Castlereagh they loathed as a traitor to his native country, and as the faithless betrayer of her dearest interests. Mr. Canning they considered as the mere disciple of Mr. Pitt, and immeasurably his inferior in every thing that should constitute a leader in the government. They hardly gave him credit for integrity of political principle, and yet they dreaded the bitterness of his satire and the keenness of his wit. If they did not think him a great man in the abstract, they were obliged to feel that he was incomparably the greatest with whom they had to maintain parliamentary warfare. His known sentiments on the subject of catholic emancipation, and his strange alliance with the no-popery faction, and, more than all, the ungenerous lampoon which was then just put forth, and which concludes our last chapter, excited in the hearts of many, feelings towards him almost bordering on contempt.

The first meeting of parliament after the appointment of the new administration was of course a trial

of strength. The debate was acrimonious, and calculated to awaken feelings of a stronger nature than mere political hostility. A majority of thirty-two only proclaimed the weakness of ministers. In this debate it was explicitly taken for granted, and the motion of Mr. Brand was founded upon the assumption that the late ministers had been required to give a solemn and written pledge that they would abstain from introducing the catholic question into the cabinet, and that they would resist the catholic claims. On this ground, Mr. Brand, in his opening speech, observed:

"I presume then, sir, I will not be thought to have stated a very hazardous proposition, when I assert, that if the law has taken responsibility from the executive, it has secured the people by attaching that responsibility to the servants of the crown. Independent, then, of all constitutional considerations, I would ask, is it consistent with common sense or common justice to exact a written pledge, restrictive of the free exercise of judgment, from those men who are alone to be responsible? Is it reasonable to expect that men should pledge themselves to act contrary to the dictates of their own judgment, when they only can suffer and be punished for that conduct of which they disapprove? But, sir, when considered in a constitutional point of view, the question is only less absurd, because it is more alarming. If the crown is not responsible, and if the servants of the crown are allowed to pledge themselves to the executive, what becomes of that responsibility, which is in itself the best preservative of the constitution? If the king is not responsible by law, and his ministers are not responsible by virtue of certain initiatory pledges, I would ask, where is the people's security against the evils of bad government? Far be it from me to question the exercise of the prerogative; the king has an undoubted right to appoint his own servants, to select his own counsellors, to advance his ministers to dignities, or to dismiss them from his service;—but I maintain that the king has not a right to restrict the range of their advice, or to control

the free exercise of their judgments. Honest men, who truly understand the public good, who were loyal to their king, and just to their country, could not listen for a moment to any pledge that went to restrain them from offering such advice as they from time to time might in their consciences think it necessary to propose. But such men were not to be compared with those political adventurers who, in their eager pursuit of power and emolument, were not ashamed, while they pledged themselves to the crown, to proffer their invalid security to a deluded people. Sir, upon the responsibility of the king's servants there can be, in the house, but one opinion, and though I do not at all think it necessary to obtrude longer upon your valuable time, by attempting to demonstrate constitutional principles, that may be so justly termed axiomatic: yet, when I consider how intimately the sacred duty of a privy counsellor is involved in the present question, I cannot abstain, taking it in this point of view, from submitting to you one further observation. The duty of a privy counsellor, as stated by Lord Coke, requires him to advise 'generally in all things that may be to the king's honour and behoof, and to the good of his realms, lordships, and subjects, without partiality or exception of persons, not leaving or eschewing so to do for affection, love, meed, doubt, or dread of any person or persons.' This, sir, in my humble opinion, brings the question within the narrowest compass. Could the late ministers, consistently with the oath they had taken as privy counsellors, have subscribed the pledge required of them? Here, then, sir, will I leave it to the house. I shall not now enter into a detail of the conduct of the late administration; in my review of it, I find nothing to censure, and much to applaud. It is not for me, sir, to remind this house of their services; it is not for me to tell this house that that administration, in the hour of their dismissal, possessed the entire confidence of parliament. I have now, sir, only to thank the house for their indulgence, and to move, 'That it is contrary to the first duties of the confidential servants of the crown, to restrain themselves by any pledge, expressed or implied, from offering to the king any advice, which the course of circumstances may render necessary for the welfare and security of any part of his majesty's extensive empire.'"—*Change of Administration, April* 9, 1807. *Parl. Deb.*

This manly justification of the Grenville administration necessarily threw suspicion upon their successors, that for the sake of office they had complied with a demand which the recently ejected servants of the crown had firmly resisted. Of both these parties Mr. Ord spoke in very strong language: "He approved (he said) of the measures of the late ministers, and sincerely regretted their removal from office; but that regret might perhaps be lighter, if they had been succeeded by men of talents or abilities. But were not their successors the dregs of a disgraced administration? Were they not the persons who had held the seals of office for a few hours on a former occasion in their possession, and carried them back again in acknowledgment of their own imbecility?"

It must be confessed that a very severe and arduous task was imposed on Mr. Canning, for he was often left singly to repel the attacks of a host of opponents; yet was he ready, "aye ready, for the field." It is remarkable, however, that on the present occasion, neither he nor his colleagues ventured to deny the existence of the required pledge, though Sir Samuel Romilly pointedly brought the charge in the following sentences. "Now, as the late ministers were dismissed because they refused this pledge, the present ministers were placed in this dilemma, either the pledge was implied, or they had deceived his majesty; for it was not pretended that his majesty had any objection to his late ministers, except the difference of opinion which occurred on this subject. If the former opinions of the present ministers were referred to, it would be found that some of them had resigned be-

cause measures similar to the bill which had been withdrawn could not be carried."

The speech of Lord Howick brought up Mr. Canning in reply, and he acquitted himself in a manner that must have greatly surprised both his friends and opponents. The conclusion of his speech, which was commenced at a late hour, and amidst visible impatience, was received with loud and reiterated cheers from all sides of the house.

"Mr. Secretary Canning rose, amidst a loud call for the question from the opposition benches. He was not surprised, on a motion brought forward for the purpose of turning out an administration, that those who supported it should wish to drown by clamour what those ministers had to say in their defence. But, however reluctant he might be to trespass on the time of the house at that late hour, and, in the exhausted state of the house, he should not be deterred by clamour from offering what he had to urge in his vindication. The noble lord's speech seemed to place him in a state of retrospective responsibility for councils which he could not be acquainted with, and for that dismissal which was the consequence of his own suicidal act. If he were to follow the course that had been pursued up to the speech of the noble lord, he should contend, what had not been denied on either side, that this question was an issue between the king and his late ministers. This was the first instance since the time of Charles, that a sovereign had been brought to the bar of parliament. The late ministers had, by their own acts, rendered their dismissal unavoidable, and he denied, that he or any of his colleagues had given any counsel on the occasion, or had intrigued for the purpose of getting into their places. On the contrary, they had laboured to prevent the confusion that ensued from the measures that had been adopted. In whatever way the bill should be disposed of, he did not think it desirable that a change of administration should take place in consequence of it. But, when his sovereign was without a ministry, and had called upon him for his services, he did not conceive himself at liberty to withhold them. Nor did

he lament the part he had taken. As to the circumstances that caused a change of government, he did not think that there was any intention to deceive his majesty. He should not impute bad motives to any man; but though there was no intention to deceive, there was too much misunderstanding in the progress of that transaction. When his majesty had declared, that he would not go a step beyond the act of 1793, it ought to have excited the attention of his ministers, and they should then have distinctly explained what was meant to be conceded by the measure. For his part, he should prefer granting to the catholics what was refused by the bill, and withholding what the bill conceded. He would sooner give the civil distinction than the sword. As to the call of the noble lord upon him, he should answer, that he did wish to form his conduct on the model of that great man, his late right hon. friend (Mr. Pitt). The noble lord had assumed, that he was of the same opinion with himself on the subject of this bill, but the noble lord had no right to judge of him but from his public votes in parliament. He had given but one vote on this question, and that was in 1804, with Mr. Pitt, against the catholic petition. But the conduct of his late right hon. friend, when he went out of office, because he could not carry the great measure he proposed, could not be better illustrated than by comparing it with that of the late ministers. The right hon. secretary here called the attention of the house to the stipulations claimed by the late ministers, that they should be allowed to recommend one policy, whilst they pursued another. The terms upon which they wished to hold their offices were, that they should be allowed to propose measures, that they might afterwards abandon them. The yearly moving of the question would have the effect of making an unfair division of the popularity and odium. The odium would be great, and all fall upon the crown; the benefit would be small, and that the catholics might have; but the whole of the popularity the ministers were to have. The noble lord had told him of the majority he should have, and of the vexatious motions that were to follow. But why waste his majorities? If sufficient to carry vexatious motions to embarrass his majesty's government, they would *à fortiori* be sufficient for the relief of his majesty's subjects; the noble lord ought,

therefore, to carry his original measure. It had been said, that no notice had been given of an exculpatory statement till after several partial publications had taken place; but this he denied —The noble lord (said the right hon. secretary) has chosen to insinuate, that the king had in fact some secret adviser, and that the communication between his majesty and those who are now in his councils began much earlier than we are willing to avow; and he instances Lord Eldon's visit to Windsor (I think on the Saturday sen'night preceding the change) as a proof of this secret communication. I would not accuse the noble lord of wilful misrepresentation, but I must ask him plainly, in the face of the house, does he not know what was the cause of Lord Eldon's visit to Windsor? Does he or does he not know, that, previous to his going to Windsor, Lord Eldon waited on Lord Grenville, and communicated to him distinctly the subject of his intended interview with the king, adding, at the same time, a solemn assurance, that he would mention no other subject to his majesty. The noble lord may insinuate, that Lord Eldon did not keep his word. I believe he did, and at least I may safely leave it to the house to determine, whether the conduct of Lord Eldon, such as I have described it, affords fair grounds for a presumption of insincerity and falsehood? And I will add, sir, that nothing but the extreme delicacy of the subject itself, upon which alone Lord Eldon went, and upon which the noble lord must know he went, to communicate with his majesty, prevents me from satisfying the house, by a distinct disclosure of it, how very far removed it was from any thing of a political nature. I know not whether it is intended to extend these insinuations to other members of the new administration, but as expressions have dropped from many gentlemen, on the other side of the house, which appear to convey that charge of intrigue and secret cabal, I think it right to say distinctly for myself, and I say it with equal confidence for my right hon. friend (Mr. Perceval) near me, and for the noble duke, who is at the head of his majesty's government, that not only we have not to answer for any secret or unfair attempts to obtain the situation we now hold, but that we did, each according to our measure and opportunities, exert ourselves fairly and honestly to prevent the mischief, which might be apprehended as likely to

attend a change of administration in the present circumstances of the country. If, when the king was left without a ministry, and the country without a government, we have not hesitated to obey the call made upon us, we were not, however, so rash, so presumptuous, or so blind, in the pursuit of objects of ambition, to the real dangers and difficulties of the times, as to labour and intrigue for so perilous a succession. For myself, I confidently aver, that, on the first intimation, which I received from authority which I believed to be unquestionable, of the strong difference of opinion subsisting between the king and his ministers, I took the determination of communicating what I had learnt, and I did communicate it without delay, to that part of the late administration with which, in spite of political differences, I had continued, and with which (so far as my own feelings are concerned) I still wish to continue, in habits of personal friendship and regard. I communicated it for the express purpose, and with the most earnest advice and exhortation, that they should lose no time in coming to such an explanation and accommodation on the subject, as should prevent matters from going to extremities. And it has been no small satisfaction to me to find, in the correspondence, which I have since had an opportunity of reading, that as the first attempts at explanation, on the part of ministers, appear to have been made on the day subsequent to my making this communication, my intention to do good, though not ultimately successful, was at least not wholly without effect. Precisely of the same sort was the conduct of my right hon. friend (Mr. Perceval) towards that part of the government with whom he had opportunity of communication. With respect to the noble duke at the head of the administration, I can state, with full confidence, that the first intercourse which he had with his majesty on this occasion was taken advantage of on his part, not for the purpose of inflaming differences, and incurring or precipitating a change, but of advising and anxiously recommending a full and amicable, and, if possible, a satisfactory explanation.—I venture, then, fearlessly to appeal to the house, whether we can be justly charged with having taken any undue advantage of the circumstances which led to the late change. Our only crime in this respect is, that when the difference between his majesty and his late servants

became irreconcileable, and when it was obvious that that administration must go out, we would not consent to join with them in pushing our sovereign to the wall, by reducing him to the alternative of taking them back upon their own terms, to be at their mercy, or of leaving the country without a government. But, sir, when I contend that we are not responsible, and cannot, in common sense, be held to be so, for acts which were done many weeks before our coming into office, let it not be supposed, however, that I should feel any reluctance to take my full share of responsibility for that part of the king's conduct, which is connected with the correspondence between his majesty and his ministers. Far from it. I should indeed be proud to be associated, in any degree, to his majesty's share of that correspondence. And painful as the whole of this discussion has been, painful as it must be to every man, who values not the forms only, but the essence of our constitution, to see the king brought here, as it were in person, to be judged at the bar of this house, it is some consolation to reflect, that from the bar of the house of commons there still lies an appeal to the tribunal of the country. It is a great consolation to every loyal mind to feel, that in proportion as the sovereign has been made most unconstitutionally responsible in his own person, he must inevitably become personally better known to his people. And when that people shall see their sovereign, full as he is of years, and labouring under heavy afflictions, yet retaining, in the vigour of a green old age, soundness of judgment, a promptness and vivacity of intellect, which have enabled him to contend singly in this painful controversy against the united talents of all his ministers; when they shall see him displaying powers as fit as those of any of those ministers, or of any other man that hears me, for the discussion of the most perplexing questions, and the conduct of the most difficult affairs; perhaps, sir, I say, when all this shall be made manifest to the people, and when by this manifestation, all these sinister and disheartening rumours, which sometimes accident and sometimes industry propagates through the country, shall have received their decisive confutation, perhaps it may fairly be doubted whether the inconvenience, the hazard, and the unconstitutional tendency of this wanton and unjustifiable arraignment of the personal con-

duct of the king, may not be more than compensated by the advantage of this display of his personal qualities. And while we regret, that those qualities should have been put to such a trial, the country will rejoice in the hope which arises from the manner in which that trial has been sustained, that, after having for near half a century watched with unceasing care and paternal anxiety over the interests and happiness of his people, he may yet, under the protection of Providence, add to that length of life, and to that series of labours, many, many years more, of care and anxiety certainly, but of protecting and efficient care, and of anxiety vigorous and active for the benefit of his people. For the advice of restoring Lord Melville to his majesty's counsels, I am ready to take my full share of responsibility; but I think that such a recommendation would have come with a better grace from the hon. gentleman (Mr. Whitbread) and his friends, who conducted a late prosecution against that noble lord to a fortunate acquittal. I shall only trouble the house with one word more. Whatever may be the issue of the division of this night, or of the series of divisions with which, if successful, it is to be followed; his majesty's ministers are determined to stand by their sovereign, even though circumstances should occur, in which they may find it their duty to appeal to the country."

Dr. Duigenan and Mr. Perceval poured forth on this occasion a torrent of zeal in favour of the protestant religion, which both those personages believed, and laboured to make others believe, would be utterly destroyed if intolerance were abated, and a dominant sect deprived of its monopoly of civil privileges;—as if the principles of the British constitution and the most uncontrolled religious freedom were not the best securities of protestantism; as if despotism and popery were not natural allies, and as if the noblest felicity which society is capable of enjoying was compatible with the basest superstition that ever degraded the social state. Connected with these weak and violent partisans, the

very firebrands of religious prejudice and hatred, who were never able to discuss the question of religious liberty in its simple relation to civil government and the exercise of civil rights, Mr. Canning received his full share of obloquy. In the estimation of some he was debased to the insignificance of the Lilliputian statesman, for whom he thundered in parliament, and flashed his lightning from the press. Mr. Ponsonby, in a moment of irritation, said of him, that "he was a man of few ideas, which he could in a moment put in array, and readily summon into action; that he was such an economist in his thoughts, and such a prodigal in words, that he could feel no embarrassment in debate; he could upon any occasion bring forward that chain of words which jingles in the ear, rarely affects the understanding, and *never approaches the heart;* but which his partisans called eloquence."

The new ministry were not very highly elated by the majorities they obtained in the house; and they began to feel that their power was any thing but secure. A dissolution of parliament was therefore deemed the best expedient to which they could resort. They adopted it without delay; while the country was alternately amused and indignant to hear, if not from the throne or the woolsack, yet from the pulpit and the press, that the late parliament had been dissolved in support of the protestant religion. On the 27th of April this important event took place: so short-lived was the existence of a legislative assembly that deserved so well of their country; but which proved inconveniently intractable to those whose creed has ever been that no ministry can stand unless it can *command* a majority

in the house of commons; which, if true, will always be the strongest *ministerial* argument against parliamentary reform.

The new parliament met on the 26th of June. The speech of the lords commissioners was discussed with unusual warmth. The agitating point was, the late dissolution. Mr. Wyndham spoke with peculiar felicity and energy. After arguing the question generally, and maintaining that to dissolve parliament during a session was always unconstitutional, and often impolitic—

"He wished to know (he said) what was the expediency of the measure in the late instance, when it produced all the inconveniences of a general election, all the injury to private property, and all the detriment to public morals, which such an event was calculated to give rise to. When all these inconveniences were to be produced, there should be a good justification of the measure. If the protestant religion was in danger, that would be a justification of the measure; if the ministers thought it was in danger, that would be a justification of them. As to the cry of the church in danger, he would reply to that by asking of the right hon. gentleman himself, did he really, and from his heart, believe any such thing? When Dr. Johnson was asked by some one, did he believe the authenticity of Ossian's Poems? he replied by asking, Do you believe it? In the same way, he would put it to the right hon. gentleman, Did he believe that the church was in danger? The belief that every concession would be granted to the catholics, was the sole ground on which he had voted for the union with Ireland. That measure had added genius and wisdom to the parliament of Britain, but these might well have flourished in their own sphere, and added to the patriotism and pride of their native land. In his opinion, nothing could have justified the union, but a belief that every privilege could be more securely granted to the catholics by the united parliament, than by that of Ireland. This was the opinion of Mr. Pitt, Mr. Burke, and Mr. Fox, the

most distinguished politicians that had adorned any country. And he would ask the noble secretary, who had been a party to all the measures of Mr. Pitt on this very subject, how could he join in any cry that the church was in danger from measures which fell far short of those which Mr. Pitt had in contemplation? As to the defence, which the right hon. gentleman had given for his silence in 1801, when the same, and, indeed, more extensive measures were proposed, it was the mere plea of a pleader, and could hardly be listened to with patience, even in any of those courts to which he had been accustomed. He was then in parliament, the friend of Mr. Pitt, and though the late measure did not go one twentieth part as far as that which Mr. Pitt proposed, instead of regarding him as the betrayer of the protestant faith, he held him up as the only fit man in the country to consolidate and direct its resources. The right hon. gentleman, however, considered this appeal to the people as having confirmed the truth of his opinions. But he must explain the adage, *vox populi, vox dei*, in a very large and extensive sense indeed, if he considered this appeal to their dormant prejudices as a decisive testimony to the justice of his opinions. It seemed to be the opinion of the ministers, on the occasion of the late dissolution, that they should take advantage of the cry of 'No Popery' while it lasted. They said, we must make hay while the sun shines: the tide of popularity, which seemed to run in their favour, might otherwise have ebbed, and left them dry on the beach. But what must we think of men, who could resort to such means in support of their influence; means which had produced for them that sovereign contempt with which they have been treated by all sober and thinking men? For two successive parliaments they had abdicated their claims, and, in fact, declared their incapacity for conducting the affairs of government, and now they stole into power under the despicable cry of 'No Popery.'"

Mr. Canning replied to the principal arguments which had been urged by the opposition. "He alluded to the different accounts which had been given of the late change of administration. At one time the

hon. gentlemen stated that they had voluntarily retired from office, and at another, that they had waited until they were forced to abandon their places. They might choose which of these cases they liked best, but he could not allow them to take to themselves both all the grace of resignation, and all the grievance of dismissal. The latter, however, was the event. They had stuck with great obstinacy to their situations, and a main objection which seemed to be urged against some of his friends was, that they wanted that first quality of a great statesman—tenacity of place."

In a subsequent debate on British and foreign shipping, Mr. Canning uttered but two or three short sentences. Yet, brief as they are, they discover considerable adroitness; they were opposed to the orders in council which involved so many questions of commercial importance. Mr. Canning declared that one of those orders, then under review, partook of all the bad qualities of half measures, attended with all the inconveniences of strong measures, without being productive of any of their good consequences. Mr. Whitbread retaliated by observing that he seldom knew any good consequences to arise from the overstrained violence of blustering politicians; to which Mr. Canning, in explanation, said, "that at all events he would rather appear in the character of an injudicious adviser than in that of a blundering accuser."

The finance committee was a subject of discussion on the 20th of June. This, as usual, brought the principal speakers on both sides of the house in collision. Mr. Canning's speech on this occasion is a galling attack upon the late administration. It is unusually satirical and severe.

Mr. Secretary Canning "had no doubt that the hon. gentleman opposite wished for a fair inquiry, and perhaps they thought the appointment of the former members the best means of securing such an inquiry. In answer to them, and particularly to the hon. gentleman (Mr. Biddulph), who was entitled to particular consideration in every thing connected with this subject, he had to say, that if human affairs could be conducted without partiality or prejudice, the plan they recommended would be entitled to preference. But as the contrary was the fact, and as personal and party attachments were known to be almost universally prevalent in that house, he saw no danger in avowing to the public what was already well known, the prevalence of those party attachments, and to guard against any unfair preponderance of those attachments, by balancing the numbers of the parties. It was, therefore, desirable to avoid appointing those whose party prejudices ran all in the same course. He would, indeed, be ready to allow, that if there was one set of men free from all party prejudice and animosity, that if those men had been for many years out of office, and if, on coming at length into office, they exercised their power, neither to stigmatize their opponents, nor immediately to reward their adherents, he would allow that it would be very fit to encourage so brilliant an example of purity, by appointing these men to be of the committee. If not perfectly pure, they would at least be perfectly unaccused, while the conduct of the inquiry would be in their own hands. If, however, he were called upon to point out the description of men most free from political animosity, it was not to the opposite bench that he would look. If he was called upon to point out those who had abstained most from the use of power for the advantage of their dependents, he would look there as little for the reality of the fanciful perfection which was so much to be wished for. If, on the contrary, he were to look for those, who made the best use of a very short interval of power for the benefit of themselves and their adherents, the hon. gentlemen were those on whom he should fix. A noble lord (H. Petty) had, upon a former occasion, told a story of an old Roman moralist, who wished to live in a house of glass, that all his actions might be seen. The noble lord had expressed a wish to live in such a house himself. He could not avoid, however,

repeating to him the vulgar proverb, 'Those who have a house of glass, ought not to begin by throwing stones.' Those by whom this principle of parliamentary practice had been not long since laid down, were now unwilling that the house of glass, which this inquiry was to constitute, should be enlarged by a bow window, so as to include them. It was impossible to state grounds for inquiry, otherwise than generally in detail. When his right hon. friend made general charges, he was called as loudly to particularise, and when he did particularise, those who forced him to do so cried shame. Well, indeed, might the specification be objected to by the noble lord opposite, and his colleagues. The noble lord and his colleagues had found out, that a collector, comptroller, searchers, and tide-waiters, were wanted at Buenos Ayres, a place not yet in our possession. Common reversions were at least exempt from the fault of bringing immediate charges on the country. But this appointment conveyed so many reversions, which would become immediately chargeable, unless, indeed, the place should not be taken, and the mischief would fall entirely on the unfortunate collector, comptroller, searchers, and tide-waiters. But it was not only in the burthen that this appointment was mischievous, but in the influence which it created. If it had been in the contemplation of a government that covered sea and land with its glories, and was to extend its power over the world, to apply this system to all its conquests, not only to those actually achieved, but to those they meant to accumulate one upon another, opening a scene which would have made Buonaparte little in comparison—we should have had collectors and comptrollers of the Bosphorus, and searchers and waiters of Rosetta. There was here to be observed, a great change in the tone of the hon. gentlemen on the subject of Buenos Ayres. When the conquest of that place was effected, the hon. gentlemen thought it not worthy of being mentioned in the king's speech. Now it had acquired a vast importance in their eyes; and why? not from its importance to the commerce, or navigation, or to the general resources of the country, but because it was a place that afforded room for the appointment of collectors, comptrollers, searchers, and tide-waiters. This was a complete key to the whole policy of the late ministers—and a most happy il-

lustration it was of their large, liberal, and enlightened views! However far the range might have extended in contemplation, the actual list ended here, and it became necessary to return home to the 300 surveyors of taxes. The noble lord's defence here, as in the former instance, was, that the appointment was prospective. But was the influence prospective? Why did the appointment take place on the eve of a general election? If the coincidence was accidental, the hon. gentlemen were certainly the first favourites of fortune! He acknowledged the high literary merit of Mr. Dugald Stuart, who had besides the merit, and he thought it no light one, of having educated the noble lord. He acknowledged and lamented the general insufficiency of the rewards bestowed on literary merit in this country; but he highly condemned the mode of reward here adopted, by constituting a new sinecure, and bestowing it on Mr. Stuart and his assignees for twenty-one years. As to the comparison instituted by the noble lord between this grant and the rewards granted to the writers of the Anti-jacobin, he, for one, felt no shame for the character or principles of that work; nor any other sorrow for the share he had in it, than that which the imperfection of his pieces was calculated to inspire. He was told, that this provision of Mr. Stuart was substituted for a professorship of medical jurisprudence, which it had been intended to institute. He should like to see the hon. gentlemen in the full swing of their insolence of power, making this appointment, immediately after their unqualified attacks upon their antagonists, as much as to say, 'Though you can do nothing, we dare do every thing.' He doubted whether this same science of medical jurisprudence could be found any where mentioned, even in the Scotch Encyclopædia. In answer to what the noble lord had said about newspapers, he would ask, was there no instance here of a newspaper (the Morning Chronicle) conspicuous for its attachment to the constitution, and for the fairness of its mode of detailing all transactions in which its party interests had a place, whose proprietor was appointed secretary to the Barrack Board, at which a secretary was a new and a sinecure institution? With such an instance in their own conduct, how could they tax the present ministers with partiality to newspapers? There was another act, which he looked upon as

a flagrant breach of the constitution, the grant of a pension of 400l. a-year during pleasure to a Scotch Judge—[Lord H. Petty said, across the table, he knew nothing about this matter]. The hon. gentlemen, when in power, were so united, that no difference of opinion prevailed among them; when out, and charged with a job, they fled in all directions, and left it to light on what head it would."

That a speech thus insolent, and breathing scorn and defiance, should provoke retaliation, ought to be no matter of surprise. Mr. Curwen therefore took up the taunt of the right hon. secretary, that "there was no independent man in parliament." Of himself, Mr. Curwen said, he could assert, he was at least thus far independent, that he had never accepted a favour from any minister, nor ever would. He would ask the right hon. secretary, whether or not he had a pension? In reply, Mr. Canning denied having said there were no independent men in the house. He had asserted only that party attachments were prevalent. As to the honourable gentleman's question, the answer was, that on his retiring from the office of under-secretary for foreign affairs, Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville proposed to make a provision for him, which he had accepted, and settled, by his desire, one half on himself, and the other half on two near and dear relations who were dependent for their subsistence upon his labours.

This manly avowal, so honourable to all the parties, and especially to Mr. Canning himself, ought certainly to have conciliated enmity itself. Yet was it afterwards made a by-word of reproach. "Near and dear relations" pointed many sarcasms, gave vivacity to many a censure on sinecurists and pensioners. Mr.

Canning, to be sure, could have no right to complain, for he was not himself characterized by the nicest delicacy, either in the manner or the subjects of his attacks. Nothing of importance occurs from this period to the prorogation of parliament, which was announced by commission on the 14th of August.

The sessions of parliament commenced with a gracious speech from the throne, presented by commission, in which was announced the bombardment of Copenhagen, and the seizure of the Danish fleet. This extraordinary expedition, so glorious to the gallant officers and seamen who achieved its object, but so deeply disgraceful to the administration by which it was planned, was thus introduced by Viscount Hamilton, who moved the address:

"In the regret which his majesty expressed at having been compelled to adopt hostile measures against Denmark, the house would undoubtedly join; but it would be a regret unmixed with reproach, it would even be a regret overpowered by feelings of gratitude to his majesty for his paternal care in rescuing the country from the most formidable danger to which it had ever been exposed; for, after the treaty of Tilsit, after the subsequent conduct of Austria and of Denmark, it was inpossible that any man could doubt of a combination of powers having been formed against us. Perhaps, among the various causes which had laid the continental states at the foot of France, none had contributed more largely to produce that disastrous effect, than the facility with which those states admitted every violation of the law of nations, of which the enemy wished to avail himself. We alone had avoided becoming the victims of the credulity, the irresolution, and the delay, that had overwhelmed all other countries. God forbid that we should ever degenerate into an imitation of them! He trusted that at such a crisis, encompassed as we were by external perils, we should never be cursed with the greatest of all evils, a timid and feeble govern-

ment. High as the spirit, and extensive as the resources of the country were, its danger would indeed be imminent, were the administration of its affairs placed in the hands of men who, with their eyes open to the designs of the enemy, would be content to reply to his acts by arguments, or hesitate to act themselves from the apprehension of responsibility. Too long, indeed, had that enemy been permitted to proceed in his career of violence to neutral powers for the aggrandizement of his own. That the expedition to Copenhagen was most important and most critical, every one must have felt when its termination was in suspense; every one must now feel that it was most wise. Its criterion was its success."

The ministry could not reasonably expect that all men would view this enterprise in the same light with this their eloquent advocate. To multitudes of enlightened and patriotic men, the ostensible reasons alleged to justify it were puerile; while the real ground, a supposed article respecting Ireland in the secret treaty of Tilsit, was a striking evidence that Ireland was an object of dread rather than of confidence; and that, instead of adopting a measure of sound policy, by conciliating her discontented millions, the administration preferred an act of unparalleled aggression against a neutral state that, by possibility, might be compelled by the enemy to assist his machinations against this disaffected and deeply injured province of our empire. Soon after the recess, Mr. Ponsonby brought forward his motion for the production of papers, as preliminary to ulterior proceedings of a grave and accusatory nature. At least in this light the motion was regarded by the ministers. Accordingly, during this stage of the business, they put forth all their strength. Mr. Canning was the Ajax of the political host. It was in this night's debate that

he broke forth in all the splendour of his genius. A good cause would have circumscribed his powers, and tamed his energy. He had an arduous task to perform. Difficulties pressed upon him on every side. He stood in the arena, exposed to the intense gaze of the civilized world—the witnesses of his conflict, and the judges who were to award the laurel of victory, or to visit his defeat with their deep and appalling execrations. The ministry knew not, till this important discussion took place, the value of their acquisition. He bore away the palm from every competitor. Both friends and opponents regarded him with admiration. This effort, however, connected with his political delinquency, as the defender of Perceval's intolerance and Castlereagh's injustice, exposed him to the shafts of ridicule, which were sometimes envenomed with the gall of malice. The Rev. Sydney Smith, alias Peter Plymley, opened upon him a vexatious battery, and sometimes pointed his sarcasms with such precision that they pierced his victim to the quick. He begins his seventh letter to his brother Abraham thus:

"In the correspondence which is passing between us, you are perpetually alluding to the foreign secretary; and in answer to the dangers of Ireland, which I am pressing upon your notice, you have nothing to urge but the confidence which you repose in the discretion and sound sense of this gentleman*. I

* The attack upon virtue and morals in the debate upon Copenhagen, is brought forward with great ostentation by this gentleman's friends. But is harlequin less harlequin, because he acts well? I was present: he leaped about, touched facts with his wand, turned yes into no, and no into yes; it was a

can only say, that I have listened to him long, and often, with the greatest attention; I have used every exertion in my power to take a fair measure of him, and it appears to me impossible to hear him upon any arduous topic without perceiving, that he is eminently deficient in those solid and serious qualities upon which, and upon which alone, the confidence of a great country can properly repose. He sweats, and labours, and works for sense, and Mr. Ellis seems always to think it is coming, but it does not come; the machine can't draw up what is not to be found in the spring; Providence has made him a light, jesting, paragraph-writing man, and that he will remain to his dying day. When he is jocular he is strong, when he is serious he is like Sampson in a wig; any ordinary person is a match for him; a song, an ironical letter, a burlesque ode, an attack in the newspaper upon Nicoll's eye, a smart speech of twenty minutes, full of gross misrepresentations and clever turns, excellent language, a spirited manner, lucky quotation, success in provoking dull men, some half information picked up in Pall Mall in the morning: these are your friend's natural weapons; all these things he can do; here I allow him to be truly great: nay, I will be just, and go still farther, if he would confine himself to these things, and consider the facete and the playful to be the basis of his character, he would, for that species of man, be universally regarded as a person of a very good understanding; call him a legislator, a reasoner, and the conductor of the affairs of a great nation, and it seems to me as absurd as if a butterfly were to teach bees to make honey. That he is an extraordinary writer of small poetry, and a diner out of the highest lustre, I do most readily admit. After George Selwyn, and perhaps Tickell, there has been no such man for this half century. The foreign secretary is a gentleman, a respectable, as well as an highly agreeable man in private life; but you may as well feed me with decayed potatoes as console me for the miseries of Ireland by

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pantomime well played, but a pantomime: harlequin deserves higher wages than he did two years ago: is he therefore fit for serious parts?

the resources of his *sense* and his *discretion*. It is only the public situation which this gentleman holds which entitles me, or induces me, to say so much about him. He is a fly in amber; nobody cares about the fly: the only question is, how the devil did it get there? Nor do I attack him from the love of glory, but from the love of utility, as a burgomaster hunts a rat in a Dutch dyke, for fear it should flood a province."

This, to be sure, is a little strong: but this is not all. Speaking of the turbulence of Ireland, and the injustice of the yoke imposed upon her at the union, he goes on to say:

"Depend upon it, whole nations have always some reason for their hatred. Before you refer the turbulence of the Irish to incurable defects in their character, tell me if you have treated them as friends and equals? Have you protected their commerce? Have you respected their religion? Have you been as anxious for their freedom as your own? Nothing of all this. What then? Why you have confiscated the territorial surface of the country twice over: you have massacred and exported her inhabitants: you have deprived four-fifths of them of every civil privilege: you have at every period made her commerce and manufactures slavishly subordinate to your own: and yet the hatred which the Irish bear to you is the result of an original turbulence of character, and of a primitive, obdurate wildness, utterly incapable of civilization! The embroidered inanities, and the sixth-form effusions of Mr. Canning, are really not powerful enough to make me believe this; nor is there any authority on earth (always excepting the Dean of Christchurch) which could make it credible to me. I am sick of Mr. Canning. There is not a hap'orth of bread to all his sugar and sack. I love not the cretaceous and incredible countenance of his colleague. The only opinion in which I agree with these two gentlemen, is that which they entertain of each other; I am sure that the insolence of Pitt, and the unbalanced accounts of Melville, were far better than the perils of this new ignorance:—

Nonne fuit satius tristes Amaryllidis iras
Atque superba pati fastidia,—nonne Menalcam,
Quamvis ille *niger* ?

" In the midst of the most profound peace, the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit, in which the destruction of Ireland is resolved upon, induce you to rob the Danes of their fleet. After the expedition sailed comes the treaty of Tilsit, containing no article *, public or private, alluding to Ireland. The state of the world, you tell me, justified us in doing this. Just God! do we think only of the state of the world when there is an opportunity for robbery, for murder, and for plunder; and do we forget the state of the world when we are called upon to be wise, and good, and just? Does the state of the world never remind us that we have four millions of subjects whose injuries we ought to atone for, and whose affections we ought to conciliate? Does the state of the world never warn us to lay aside our infernal bigotry, and to arm every man who acknowledges a God, and can grasp a sword? Did it never occur to this administration, that they might virtuously get hold of a force ten times greater than the force of the Danish fleet? Was there no other way of protecting Ireland, but by bringing eternal shame upon Great Britain, and by making the earth a den of robbers? See what the men whom you have supplanted would have done. They would have rendered the invasion of Ireland impossible, by restoring to the catholics their long lost rights: they would have acted in such a manner that the French would neither have wished for invasion, nor dared to attempt it: they would have increased the permanent strength of the country while they preserved its reputation unsullied. Nothing of this kind your friends have done, because they are solemnly pledged to do nothing of this kind; because to tolerate all religions, and to equalise civil rights to all sects, is to oppose some of the worst passions of our nature,—to plunder and to oppress is to gratify them all. They wanted the huzzas of mobs, and they have for

* This is now completely confessed to be the case by ministers.

ever blasted the fame of England to obtain them. Were the fleets of Holland, France, and Spain destroyed by larceny? You resisted the power of 150 sail of the line by sheer courage, and violated every principle of morals from the dread of 15 hulks, while the expedition itself cost you three times more than the value of the larcenous matter brought away. The French trample upon the laws of God and man, not for old cordage, but for kingdoms, and always take care to be well paid for their crimes. We contrive, under the present administration, to unite moral with intellectual deficiency, and to grow weaker and worse by the same action. If they had any evidence of the intended hostility of the Danes, why was it not produced? Why have the nations of Europe been allowed to feel an indignation against this country beyond the reach of all subsequent information? Are these times, do you imagine, when we can trifle with a year of universal hatred, dally with the curses of Europe, and then regain a lost character at pleasure, by the parliamentary perspirations of the foreign secretary, or the solemn asseverations of the pecuniary Rose? Believe me, Abraham, it is not under such ministers as these that the dexterity of honest Englishmen will ever equal the dexterity of French knaves; it is not in their presence that the serpent of Moses will ever swallow up the serpents of the magicians.

"Lord Hawkesbury says, that nothing is to be granted to the catholics from fear. What! not even justice? Why not? There are four millions of disaffected people within twenty miles of our own coast. I fairly confess, that the dread which I have of their physical power is with me a very strong motive for listening to their claims. To talk of not acting from fear is mere parliamentary cant. From what motive but fear, I should be glad to know, have all the improvements in our constitution proceeded? I question if any justice has ever been done to large masses of mankind from any other motive. By what other motives can the plunderers of the Baltic suppose nations to be governed in their intercourse *with each other?* If I say, give this people what they ask because it is just, do you think I should get ten people to listen to me? Would not the lesser of the two Jenkinsons be the first to treat me with contempt? The only true way to make the mass of mankind see the beauty of

justice, is by showing to them in pretty plain terms the consequences of injustice. If any body of French troops land in Ireland, the whole population of that country will rise against you to a man, and you could not possibly survive such an event three years. Such, from the bottom of my soul, do I believe to be the present state of that country; and so far does it appear to me to be impolitic and unstatesman-like to concede any thing to such a danger, that if the catholics, in addition to their present just demands, were to petition for the perpetual removal of the said Lord Hawkesbury from his majesty's councils, I think, whatever might be the effect upon the destinies of Europe, and however it might retard our own individual destruction, that the prayer of the petition should be instantly complied with. Canning's crocodile tears should not move me; the hoops of the maids of honour should not hide him. I would tear him from the bannisters of the back stairs, and plunge him in the fishy fumes of the dirtiest of all his Cinque ports."

Among the frequent severe and witty allusions to Mr. Canning and his superior in office, the chancellor of the exchequer, in which this facetious writer indulges, are the following. While they cease to wound, they can never fail to amuse. The invective has lost its sting: the wit can never lose its pleasantry.

"You tell me I am a party-man. I hope I shall always be so when I see my country in the hands of a pert London joker and a second-rate lawyer. Of the first, no other good is known than that he makes pretty Latin verses; the second seems to me to have the head of a country parson, and the tongue of an Old Bailey lawyer."

"As for the light and frivolous jester, of whom it is your misfortune to think so highly, learn, my dear Abraham, that this political Killigrew, just before the breaking up of the last administration, was in actual treaty with them for a place; and if they had survived twenty-four hours longer, he would have been now declaiming against the cry of 'No Popery!' instead of inflaming it. With this practical comment on the baseness of human nature, I bid you adieu."

"I am sure we are not to be saved by religious hatred, and by religious trifling; by any psalmody, however sweet, or by any persecution, however sharp: I am certain the sounds of Mr. Pitt's voice, and the measure of his tones, and the movement of his arms, will do nothing for us, when these tones, and movements, and voice bring us always declamation without sense or knowledge, and ridicule without good humour or conciliation. Oh, Mr. Plymley, Mr. Plymley! this never will do. Mrs. Abraham Plymley, my sister, will be led captive by an amorous Gaul, and Joel Plymley, your first-born, will be a French drummer."

"'Out of sight, out of mind,' seems to be a proverb which applies to enemies as well as friends. Because the French army was no longer seen from the cliffs of Dover; because the sound of cannon was no longer heard by the debauched London bathers on the Sussex coast; because the Morning Post no longer fixed the invasion sometimes for Monday, sometimes for Tuesday, sometimes (positively for the last time of invading) on Saturday; because all these causes of terror were suspended, you conceived the power of Buonaparte to be at an end, and were setting off for Paris, with Lord Hawkesbury the conqueror.—This is precisely the method in which the English have acted during the whole of the revolutionary war. If Austria or Prussia armed, doctors of divinity immediately printed those passages out of Habakkuk in which the destruction of the usurper by General Mack and the Duke of Brunswick are so clearly predicted. If Buonaparte halted, there was a mutiny, or a dysentery. If any one of his generals were eaten up by the light troops of Russia, and picked (as their manner is) to the bone, the sanguine spirit of this country displayed itself in all its glory. What scenes of infamy did the Society for the Suppression of Vice lay open to our astonished eyes! tradesmen's daughters dancing; pots of beer carried out between the first and second lesson; and dark and distant rumours of indecent prints! Clouds of Mr. Canning's cousins arrived by the waggons; all the contractors left their cards with Mr. Rose; and every plunderer of the public crawled out of his hole, like slugs, and grubs, and worms, after a shower of rain."

"In the last year land to the amount of *eight hundred thousand pounds* was purchased by the catholics in Ireland. Do you think it possible to be-Perceval, and be-Canning, and be-Castlereagh such a body of men as this out of their common rights and their common sense? Mr. George Canning may laugh and joke at the idea of protestant bailiffs ravishing catholic ladies, under the 9th clause of the sunset bill; but if some better remedy is not applied to the distractions of Ireland than the jocularity of Mr. Canning, they will soon put an end to his pension, and to the pension of those 'near and dear relatives,' for whose eating, drinking, washing, and clothing, every man in the united kingdoms now pays his two-pence or three-pence a year. You may call these observations coarse, if you please; but I have no idea that the Sophias and Carolines of any man breathing are to eat national veal, to drink public tea, to wear treasury ribbons, and then that we are to be told that it is coarse to animadvert upon this pitiful and eleemosynary splendour. If this is right, why not mention it? If it is wrong, why should not he who enjoys the ease of supporting his sisters in this manner bear the shame of it? Every body seems hitherto to have spared a man who never spares any body."

Referring to the state of Europe at this period, and the perilous condition of this country, requiring all its strength, and unanimity through all its provinces, in order to stand up firmly against the common foe, and the universal danger, the facetious Peter thus finely concludes a paragraph of vituperative eloquence:

"The British empire at this moment is in the state of a peach-blossom; if the wind blows gently from one quarter it survives, if furiously from the other it perishes. A stiff breeze may set in from the north, the Rochefort squadron will be taken, and the friar will be the most holy of men; if it comes from some other point, Ireland is gone, we curse ourselves as a set of monastic madmen, and call out for the unavailing satisfaction of Mr. Perceval's head. Such a state of political exist-

ence is scarcely credible; it is the action of a mad young fool standing upon one foot, and peeping down the crater of Mount Ætna; not the conduct of a wise and a sober people deciding upon their best and dearest interests: and in the name, the much injured name, of Heaven, what is it all for, that we expose ourselves to these dangers? Is it that we may sell more muslin? Is it that we may acquire more territory? Is it that we may strengthen what we have already acquired? No: nothing of all this; but that one set of Irishmen may torture another set of Irishmen; that Sir Phelim O'Callagan may continue to whip Sir Toby M'Tackle, his next door neighbour, and continue to ravish his catholic daughters. And these are the measures which the honest and consistent secretary supports; and this is the secretary whose genius in the estimation of brother Abraham is to extinguish the genius of Buonaparte! Pompey was killed by a slave, Goliah smitten by a stripling, Pyrrhus died by the hand of a woman; tremble, thou great Gaul, from whose head an armed Minerva leaps forth in the hour of danger; tremble, thou scourge of God; a pleasant man is come out against thee, and thou shalt be laid low by a joker of jokes, and he shall talk his pleasant talk against thee, and thou shalt be no more!"

Again, he thus concludes another letter:

"If we conciliate Ireland, we can do nothing amiss; if we do not, we can do nothing well. If Ireland was friendly, we might equally set at defiance the talents of Buonaparte, and the blunders of his rival, Mr. Canning; we could then support the ruinous and silly bustle of our useless expeditions, and the almost incredible ignorance of our commercial orders in council. Let the present administration give up but this one point, and there is nothing which I would not consent to grant them. Mr. Perceval shall have full liberty to insult the tomb of Mr. Fox, and to torment every eminent dissenter in Great Britain; Lord Camden shall have large boxes of plums; Mr. Rose receive permission to prefix to his name the appellative of virtuous; and to the Viscount Castlereagh a round sum of ready money shall be well and truly paid into his hand. Lastly, what remains to Mr. George Canning, but that he ride up and down Pall-Mall glorious upon a white horse, and that they cry out before him,

Thus shall it be done to the statesman who hath written 'The Needy Knife-Grinder,' and the German play? Adieu only for the present; you shall soon hear from me again; it is a subject upon which I cannot long be silent."

We conclude these extracts with the following sentence:

"Recent circumstances have by no means tended to diminish in the minds of men that hope of elevation beyond their own rank which is so congenial to our nature; from pleading for John Roe to taxing John Bull; from jesting for Mr. Pitt, and writing in the Antijacobin, to managing the affairs of Europe: these are leaps which seem to justify the fondest dreams of mothers and of aunts."

These are among some of the items in the aggregate sum which all men must pay who rise to eminence by the strength of their talents and the laxity of their principles. We have presented in the most agreeable form the sentiments which Mr. Canning's elevation and political conduct awakened in many bosoms. It is evident that he was becoming more and more formidable to the opposition; and yet, on many questions, his heart must have been with them. We regret that his negociation with them was not concluded before their dismission. He was never a thorough tory, but often acted with them from constraint and necessity. How deep, then, the obligations of the party to a man who, for a series of years, was, under these circumstances, their most effective advocate! He lived to experience their gratitude; we wish we could add that he had survived it. But we will no longer detain our readers from his defence of the ministers in the affair of Copenhagen.

"Mr. Secretary Canning then rose. He commenced his reply by observing, that the moment was at length arrived, when the

gentlemen opposite, so peculiarly qualified by their own splendid achievements to inquire into the conduct of their successors, had, by a worthy selection of the right hon. gentleman, who had just sat down, put his majesty's ministers on their trial for that which, until questioned by them, had been considered as the salvation of the country. In the greatness of his apprehension, lest all moral impressions should be effaced from the minds of the house, the right hon. gentleman had taken a course which afforded a brilliant example of morality, not only out of the ordinary track, but more severe even than that Roman morality which he knew had its admirers on the opposite bench. His majesty's ministers were called to account —not for disaster and disgrace. They had been called to answer on an accusation of success, to explain the elements, and justify the motives, of an eminent service successfully performed. Whatever might be the decision of the house, he, for one, should always feel the highest satisfaction in having been so accused. It was also a source of peculiar gratification, that no imputation could rest on those gentlemen by whom this motion was brought forward, of being actuated by party feelings, as had sometimes happened, when the successors of an administration had been left in possession of a glory which they had dilapidated. He was not aware, that any envious feelings of comparison could have instigated the present motion: when nothing had been done by one set of men, it was impossible to compare their actions with what had been done by another. There was another feature in this transaction honourable to the character of the house; they were not then debating how to ward off impending danger, but, in comparative security, were discussing by what mode that security could be continued. According to the sentiments of the gentlemen opposite, the restoration of the Danish fleet would be the best mode of continuing that security; for, certainly, if it were decided, that the taking of them was unjust, the justice of retaining them could not possibly be asserted. The house would not blame the spoilers and yet keep the spoil. Though he could not agree with the right hon. gentleman in his conclusion, he agreed with him in his premises, that if injustice had been done, it should be not only marked but repaired. The right hon. gentleman had fairly stated, that the

disposition of Denmark and Russia, and the means of France, constituted the question before the house. He had admitted the designs of France without any other evidence than that contained in his majesty's speech. With respect to the disposition of Denmark, he begged the right hon. gentlemen to recollect, at the outset, that it was not maintained by his majesty's ministers, that, wilfully, knowingly, and of choice, Denmark had been desirous of war with Great Britain, rather than of peace. This had neither been maintained, nor was it necessary to be so. A right hon. friend of his, on the opposite side of the house (Mr. Sheridan), had said, on a late evening, that a case of weakness on the part of Denmark, and of a determination to avail herself of that weakness, on the part of France, would alone be a justification of the conduct of the British government. Though he did not impute to Denmark a disposition to go to war with this country, he protested against the advantage which was taken of this admission, when it was asserted, that we had had the hearts of the Danes, and that we had forfeited them. He did not like talking of national dislikes, but such an observation evinced a most complete blindness to the fact, which was, that from the moment of the armed neutrality in 1780, there had been a feeling towards this country on the part of Denmark, not of direct hostility, but certainly not of very cordial friendship. Every body knew what had been the conduct of Denmark at the end of two former wars. In inciting the armed neutrality of 1780, Denmark had been an active agent; and at the end of 1800, but a few months after Denmark had declared her abandonment of the principles on which the armed neutrality was formed, she again entered into a league confederated against Great Britain. Did this testify the good intentions of Denmark? Or, on the other hand, did it testify her means of resisting the influence of superior powers? Let whichever part of the alternative the house chose be adopted, he would not hesitate to say, that any government would be lost to a due sense of the interests of the country, if, with a recollection of former occurrences, they had not looked with vigilance and suspicion to see how Denmark would conduct herself at a period of so much greater danger to Great Britain. Was it not probable that a league of much more force, and knit with much greater

vigour than any preceding one, would be formed against this country? Was it not probable, from the experience of the past, that Denmark would be induced by inclination, or compelled by force, to join that league? The favourite project of Buonaparte, since he had desisted from his threat of immediate invasion, was to destroy our commerce, and to collect a naval force, which should run down the navy of Great Britain. Not a treaty did he conclude in which the exclusion of British merchandize and shipping did not form a leading article. In terms too plain to be mistaken, he had avowed his intention to bring every power of the continent to bear upon Great Britain. Was there any thing in the situation of Denmark which rendered it probable, that she was out of his view in this avowal? To all these presumptions the right hon. gentleman had thought it sufficient to answer, that Denmark had prepared against any attempt on the part of France, to control her conduct, by stationing a military force in Holstein. What was the history of that force? The greatest danger to which Denmark was exposed from France was in 1803, when France occupied Hanover with a large force. Then not a man was in Holstein beyond the peace garrison. In this state the boasted cordon of Holstein remained till the period that France seemed disposed to molest Denmark?—No—till the army of England and Sweden were in force in Hanover; then, and not till then, the Danes increased their military power in Holstein. He must be an ingenious arguer who could deduce from this circumstance, that England had been the object of the sympathy of Denmark, and France of her apprehension. After the battle of Jena, the territory of Denmark had been violated by a French detachment in pursuit of a Prussian corps, and a slight skirmish took place with the Danish troops, in which a Danish general was taken, and conveyed to the headquarters of the French general, where, in place of being treated with the distinction to be expected from an officer of a friendly power, he met with no very flattering reception; and was sent back, after his horse had been stolen, and his pockets picked, under every species of injury which a licentious soldiery could inflict. This had been done whilst the Danish army collected to cover the neutrality of Holstein was stationed in the neighbourhood. Was this event followed by the advance of that

army? No such thing; the insult was immediately succeeded by the retreat of the Danish army; and this circumstance produced a remonstrance, on the part of the British government, against the conduct of the Danish government, in neglecting to vindicate its neutrality. The mention of this circumstance led him to contradict a misrepresentation which had been charged against the British government, namely, that the Danish army had been stationed in Holstein at its desire, in order that its designs against Copenhagen might be more easily accomplished. This statement was so wholly unfounded, that it was not till the retreat of the Danish army before a handful of French troops, that the British government had made a representation, complaining, that that was not the way for Denmark to enforce its neutrality. The conduct of France to Sweden was very different. When the French division, commanded by General Murat, entered Lubeck, 2000 Swedish troops were made prisoners, after the storming of the town; and the general who commanded them was not only treated with every distinction due to his rank and character, but sent back with a message to the king of Sweden from the French general, the brother-in-law of Buonaparte, inviting him to make common cause with France, intimating that it would be for his advantage to do so, and hinting that it was unnatural for Denmark to possess Norway, which ought to be annexed to Sweden. This had been the conduct of France towards Sweden at a period contemporary with the assertion of the Danish neutrality, and when afterwards a negociation was entered into at Hamburgh, for the release of the Swedish prisoners, the same communication was made to the Swedish chargé d'affaires there. What was the conduct of the king of Sweden upon this occasion? He sent immediately to acquaint the crown prince with the offer that had been made to him, and proffered the assistance of 20,000 Swedish troops for the defence of Denmark, an assistance which the British government also had strongly recommended to the acceptance of the government of Denmark. This offer, thus recommended on our part, had been rejected by the Danish government, which, in communicating the terms of the offer, concealed entirely the proposal of France respecting Norway. Could the right hon. gentleman then contend, that after such conduct,

we had a right to rely on the frank and full declaration of Denmark? Shortly after, Hamburgh was evacuated by the French, but re-occupied on the 19th Nov. only two days before the famous decree of the 21st Nov. This decree was communicated to the Danish government, and no remonstrance was made against it; yet, when the mitigated measure of retaliation was afterwards resorted to by the British government, then the rage of the Danish government was excited, and a determination to resist its execution declared. It was due, however, in justice to the noble lord who preceded him in office (Lord Howick), to state, that this determination had been manfully met; which led to its abandonment. He did not mean to insist on this as conclusive, though it amounted to a strong presumption, that, whether from predilection or necessity, the Danish government had no power of election between England and France; there was no choice, no discussion, no reasoning upon the subject. The magistrates of Hamburgh had remonstrated against the decree of the 21st of Nov., and sent a deputation to wait upon Buonaparte with it. In the conference which the deputies had with Buonaparte, they represented to him the ruin of commerce that would be the consequence of pursuing his wild plan of restrictions; to which his answer was, 'that he would annihilate all commerce; for, as commerce and England were identified, and he was determined that England should fall, it was necessary that commerce should fall also.' But he did not stop there; he added, 'that he would make others co-operate with him,' and then adverting to this mighty neutral, this powerful independent state, he said, 'let that little prince take care, or I shall teach him how to act.' This was not a private communication, but a statement in a conference which had since been published. What was it that Buonaparte was to teach the crown prince of Denmark, to whom he directed such an insulting observation as no one individual could address to another without offence, except the manner of making his means subservient to the views of the French government? When the French shut the Elbe and the Weser, the Danish government consented to the measure without a murmur, but remonstrated strongly against our blockade of those rivers, though the remonstrance was afterwards given up, when it was found that it would be injurious

to their own commerce to press their objections to the measure. That it was not the determination of the Danish government to defend Holstein against the French appeared evident from a variety of opinions, which he found recorded in his office. The right hon. gentleman had called for copies of correspondence to show what was the immediate intention of Denmark, but he must contend, that the concurrent opinions of several ministers at different times, and under similar circumstances, were more to be depended upon as a ground of decision, than the opinion of any individual, however qualified he might be to form a correct judgment.—The right hon. secretary here read extracts from several despatches from Mr. Garlicke, dated Copenhagen, December, 1806, stating, that, after the French decree of the 21st November had been communicated to the Danish government, a demand was made that the Danish army should be withdrawn from Holstein, that no English or Swedish troops should be allowed to enter the Danish territory, nor any measures taken demonstrative of distrust of France: that on receipt of this intelligence at Kiel, relays of horses had been provided, not for the advance, but to secure the retreat, of the crown prince. He also read from a subsequent despatch, dated 28th December, 1806, that no preparations for defence had been made, nor any inclination shown to resort to the aid of the natural allies of Denmark; that several persons employed in the offices of state, though not in the highest department, acted in collusion with France, and were attached to the French interests; that these persons would have considerable influence on the opinions respecting the defence of the country; and that, viewing the indolence of some, and the activity of others, at the Danish court, he (Mr. Garlicke) thought it his duty to state the truth, that there was no reason to conclude, that when France was in an attitude to enforce her demand, she would insist upon the exclusion of British vessels from the ports of Denmark, and probably afterwards upon the surrender of the dockyards of Copenhagen; and that it was therefore the more necessary for the British government to use every means of vigilance and precaution, to defeat the designs of the enemy in that quarter. These had been the opinions of that minister upon the policy and temper of the Danish government, and yet that was the

power upon whose determination they were required implicitly to rely. It would not be just for him, in stating these facts, to withhold his tribute of applause from those who had preceded him in the office he had now the honour to fill, and who had met with firmness the remonstrances and demonstrations of the Danish government. The noble lord who had immediately preceded him had instructed Mr. Garlicke to declare to the Danish government, that his majesty could never, in the event of that power submitting to the control of France, suffer either the whole or a part of its navy to be placed at the disposal of France. [Loud cries of hear! hear!] The hon. gentlemen opposite might continue their acclamations; but the opinion was entitled to respect. Perhaps, however, the noble lord had not considered the means adequate to the end, and did not look upon the capture of Holstein as more likely to secure the possession of the Danish fleet, than the conquest of Alexandria that of the Turks. But the instructions of the noble lord went on to say, that if the Danes should suffer the French to occupy Holstein, his majesty could not abstain from those measures which would be necessary to maintain the honour of his crown, and assert the interest of his subjects. [Loud cries of hear! hear! from the opposition.] He presumed, from their acclamation, that the gentlemen opposite inferred, that these measures should not be resorted to until the Danish navy should be actually taken, or until the agreement should be entered into for its surrender, or until a communication of such agreement should be made by a government which had entered into a convention with this country in August, and in the December following had violated that convention. The whole conduct of that court showed, that, either from necessity or inclination, it would have taken a part against this country, and it was no weak presumption of such an event, that all the offers of France had been kept back from this country, whilst they were amusing us with the assurance, that they placed an implicit reliance upon the declarations of France. He had been hitherto speaking of the state of Denmark in December, 1807, and January, 1808, when Buonaparte was employed at a distance in Poland against armies, certainly not equal to his own, but which kept him at bay, and by a small assistance might have been rendered equal to his

armies. By what means could Denmark defend herself against the French, when Buonaparte should return with his whole force triumphant from Poland, after she had refused the assistance that had been offered to her? Of all persons, he did not think that his majesty's ministers should be accused of injustice by the captors of Alexandria; of mismanagement by the attackers of the Dardanelles; as inglorious by the conquerors of Constantinople.—But though he should admit, that the demand of the Danish navy was a strong measure, yet there was some extenuation in that case, which did not apply to the demand of the Turkish fleet. He did not mean to argue here the difference of the necessity in either instance. There was this circumstance, which bore upon the case of the Danish navy, that the Danish government, contemplating the dangers that were gathering round it, had entertained the project of reducing its navy by sale, and he had it upon authority to state, that the Russian minister had actually entered into a treaty for the purchase of part of the Danish navy.—As to the influence of national pride, therefore, it could not be very active; for he could not conceive any situation that this country could be placed in, in which she could entertain a proposal for the disposal, by sale, of any part of the British navy. This would not certainly justify the demand of the Danish fleet; but it certainly did strip the right hon. gentleman's speech of part of its gorgeous eloquence. The experience of the past had enabled his majesty's ministers to judge of the conduct that would be pursued by Denmark. Had she not received intimation of the dangers that impended over her? Had not the bulletin published by Buonaparte after the battle of Friedland given her notice of her approaching fate, when he stated, 'that the blockade of the British islands would then cease to be a vain word?' What ports but those of Denmark could this prospective threat apply to, for what others were neutral? The conferences, too, at Tilsit, and the immediate execution of some of the arrangements entered into there, by the restoration of the dukes of Mecklenburg and Oldenburg, for whom the emperor of Russia had particularly interested himself, on the condition of shutting their ports against Great Britain, showed the designs of Buonaparte, and pointed to Denmark as the next state that would be called upon

to submit to his laws of blockade.—To Denmark alone this intimation of the bulletin referred, and accordingly she was found shrinking into her shell as France approached, and neglecting to make any addition to her means of defence. She had declared the French decree of the 21st November innocent, whilst she remonstrated strongly against the British mild retaliation in the order of the 7th of January as unjust; and yet this was the power which they were told was capable of defending itself against France! The proposition was not maintainable, and if his majesty's ministers had not acted upon the impressions they received from the experience of the past, and their knowledge of the state and sentiments of the court of Denmark, they would not have done their duty. If they had not taken the very steps which were now censured, the eloquence of the right hon. gentleman was cold and dead, compared with the thunder that would have then rolled over their heads. But these were distant warnings. Had not Denmark more immediate intimation of its danger? General Bernadotte, on coming to take the command at Hamburgh, directed the assembled burghers to prepare quarters for 15,000 men, which he represented as only the advanced guard of a much greater force, that was to be employed on an expedition which would not require him to be long absent from Hamburgh. Whither could this expedition be directed but against Holstein? Bernadotte had also been charged with a mission to the crown prince at Kiel; and, though he should state as a fact a thing which he did not know upon official authority, that officer, he was assured, had had an interview with the crown prince at Kiel on the night of the 21st of July. He believed the fact, though he could not state it positively, and he knew also, that it was believed at Kiel, in Holstein, Hamburgh, and at St. Petersburgh, at the time. Bernadotte, too, had made no secret of the object of his mission, being to procure the exclusion of the English from the ports of Denmark. Was this a state of things, in which his majesty's ministers were to go on confiding in the sincerity and means of the Danish government, till they should be called on for assistance? He wished to know why they should have waited for the declaration of Denmark, when fully apprised of the disposition of France towards that power, of the inability of Russia

to control that disposition, and of the want of means or of inclination on the part of Denmark to resist the force of France? But the right hon. gentleman had argued that though there had been enough in the circumstances and conduct of Denmark to excite suspicion, or call for measures of precaution, yet there was not sufficient to justify the length to which the measures of his majesty's government had been carried. For himself, he did not know what other measures could have been resorted to: and he would defy the ingenuity of the gentlemen opposite to show what others could have been adopted, that would have insured the accomplishment of the object. It was not necessary for him, in this instance, to say that the whole of the force employed on this occasion had not been provided for this expedition originally. A very large part of it had been employed to assist the king of Sweden, the remainder had been provided on principles of precaution, and, as the influx of intelligence demonstrated the critical nature of the emergency, or, as the views of France developed themselves, it became more necessary to employ the whole upon this important service.—As to the demand of the fleet, he was at issue with the right hon. gentleman; but as he meant to object to the production of the papers he called for, he thought it right to state, that the proposition intended to have been made in the first instance to the court of Denmark was to surrender its fleet in deposit, to be returned on the conclusion of peace. This proposition had not been submitted to the Danish government, because the gentleman who was the bearer of it, on his arrival at Kiel, felt confident that he should see the prince on the following morning, but found in the morning that the prince had set out for Copenhagen; on following the prince to Copenhagen, he found he had returned to Kiel. The Danish minister, whom he met at Copenhagen, had orders not to treat upon terms he was authorized to propose: the minister at Kiel could not treat till the return of a courier from Copenhagen; the minister at Copenhagen could not open a negociation till the return of a messenger from Kiel. Under these circumstances, it was impossible to enter into any negociation that could hold out any prospect of a speedy or satisfactory result, and thus it was that the original proposition had never been submitted to the Danish government. A sufficient force had been sent to

justify the court of Denmark to France in conceding to our demand, or, if it did not concede, to accomplish the object for which it had been despatched.—As to the violated dignity of the Danish nation, the very display of our force before Copenhagen might be considered a violation of that dignity. If one of our cruisers had searched a single Danish ship, or stopped a corporal's guard going to Zealand, this might also be called an attack upon that nation; and upon this subject he should quote a great authority upon the law of nations, which he held in his hand. That great modern expositor of the law of nations, whom the right hon. gentleman, in the religious part of his speech, seemed to consider as a special instrument in the hands of Providence, Buonaparte, who, in his tender concern for the interests of this country, always took care to give an exposition of his sentiments at a time when it would bear on a parliamentary debate, had given, in a Moniteur which arrived this very day, a sufficient proof of what would have made him consider Denmark as in a state of hostility with France. When the Austrian minister, Starhemberg, was recalled, he was particularly ordered to leave London by the 20th, as parliament were to meet on the 21st: and a Moniteur, which had arrived this very day, had given an exposition of Buonaparte's sentiments with respect to neutrals. In the justification of the conduct of France towards Portugal, one of Buonaparte's ministers says in his official report, 'If any sovereign in Europe should allow his territory to be violated by the English, the act would clearly place that sovereign in hostility with your majesty; and, therefore, if the Portuguese have suffered their vessels to be violated by the cruisers of that power, they, too, were in hostility with your majesty.' Now, those who thought so much of the wounded pride of Denmark should consider, that, upon this principle, the search of the smallest vessel, in crossing the Belt, would be sufficient to place Denmark in a state of war with France. With a French army on the frontiers of Holstein, and no English fleet or force off Copenhagen, it would be an idle waste of words, a mere mockery of negociation, to enter into any discussions. Humanity as well as policy required a force large enough for the ultimate accomplishment of the object under any circumstances. No man could blame his majesty's ministers for

having made the force much larger than was necessary for either object, in order to invite the surrender of the fleet which was required; but, when no proposition would be listened to, it was satisfactory that the means employed were sufficient for the accomplishment of the object with the least possible loss. The right hon. gentleman had said that the case could only be justified by necessity; but he was sure the right hon. gentleman must carry his principle further, and admit that the measure ought not to be carried beyond the necessity of the case. He was, therefore, surprised to hear the right hon. gentleman say, at the conclusion of his speech, that the measure ought to have been pushed to extremity. By other premises he might arrive at that conclusion, but certainly not from those he had that night stated. The right hon gentleman had said, that the Danish government could defend the islands against France, though France should be in possession of Holstein. But, if the Danish navy was not prepared against England, neither could it be prepared against France. However, the fact was, and it was notorious, that after Zealand had surrendered, many Danish troops had succeeded in getting into that island, notwithstanding the judicious distribution of the British naval force in the Belts, by the very able officer who commanded in that quarter. On the authority of his predecessor he could state, that the pressure in Holstein was considered as likely to lead to the surrender of Zealand. The right hon. gentleman had asked, why they had not put their questions directly to Russia, respecting her conduct? he would answer, that they had flattered themselves, that by pursuing a course rather conciliatory, they might bring back Russia to the line of her true policy, and therefore they abstained from any conduct that might drive her irrecoverably into the arms of France. But the right hon. gentleman asked why, if Russia were a party against us, we ought not to have selected Russia for our attack? To this question, which had been so often put, the answer was so obvious, that he was surprised to hear it repeated. If they had had certain information of the hostile intentions of Russia, and the object which they had in view were not attainable by any other means, he agreed that Russia should have been attacked. It had been shown, that the object sought from Denmark could not have been ob-

tained without a prompt and peremptory force, and that that object was of the highest moment to the security of this country. An attack upon Cronstadt might have been productive of glory, but would not have diminished the maritime means that could be employed against us, and which constituted our danger. Would it then have been wise, or politic, or safe, to have passed the harbour of Copenhagen, which contained 20 sail of the line, that would instantly become the instruments of the enemy's vengeance against us, in order to execute a barren bravado against Cronstadt, where we could obtain but three or four rotten hulks? It was true, he admitted, that Russian ships of the line had passed through our fleets, and we had the choice of attacking them; but, aware of the circumstances by which the emperor had been rendered the friend of France, of the disgusting humiliations to which he had been subjected at the conferences of Tilsit, and hoping that his magnanimous spirit might still be driven to resistance and aggression, his majesty's ministers had still cherished the hope that the Emperor Alexander would retrace his steps, not for the purpose of a renewal of war with France, (God forbid!) but in order to consult the true interests of his empire. In the present circumstances of the world, a war with France would be hopeless; but it was not hopeless that the spirit and disposition of his people might bring him back to better counsels. They had strong grounds to know that the intentions of Russia were hostile, but, in the most inauspicious moment, they were not without expectations of altering them. The right hon. gentleman had contended that this prospect was not improved by calling upon Russia to sanction the business of Copenhagen; but it was somewhat strange, that such an opinion should be entertained by those who held that it was of no consequence whether a mediator was friendly or not. He could assure the right hon. gentleman that the note of Baron Budberg, which he imputed to some French intelligence respecting the transactions at Copenhagen, was not produced by any such cause. The business at Copenhagen had been known at St. Petersburgh on the 22d July, a week before that note was written; and if gentlemen reflected, that General Savary dictated to the Emperor of Russia in his capital, they might easily account for the asperity of any note which might have been submitted to his

inspection. All accounts agreed in representing, that the mind of the court of Russia was alienated from this country, and one might easily conceive a reason for that alienation. The expectation of assistance from this country, no matter whether well or ill founded, was the cause, not of the peace of Tilsit, but of the temper in which it was concluded, when the military disasters had rendered that peace necessary. Out of twenty despatches received from our ambassador with the emperor, there was not one in which he did not say, 'Send assistance, or Russia will fail you; make a diversion, which will take part of the weight of war off Russia, or she will withdraw from it.' As to the charge, that the expedition to Copenhagen was the cause of the hostility of Russia, he contended on the authority of our ambassador at Petersburgh, that the fact was not so; but he could also refer to the authority of another noble person, who had an ample opportunity of knowing the truth of what he here advanced, and he should do this with the more satisfaction, because of some rumours he had heard, that that noble person (Lord Hutchinson) had declared an opinion, since his return to this country, that the expedition to Copenhagen was the cause of the hostility of Russia. The right hon. secretary here read an extract from a despatch from Lord Hutchinson, dated Memel, 20th of July, and stating, that there were many secret articles in the treaty of Tilsit; that the predominant party in the Russian court was French, but that the rational part of the nation was against a war with England; that it was probable the secret articles related to Turkey, and to the shutting of the Russian ports against England, in the event of the failure of a negociation within a limited time. This extract would be sufficient to do away any impression that the rumours to which he alluded might have made, as if the noble writer of the despatch really attributed the hostility of Russia to the business at Copenhagen. Hoping for a change of circumstances, they had thought it better to afford to the Russian government an opportunity of releasing itself from the embarrassing engagements into which it had unfortunately entered at Tilsit; and when he considered the nature of the policy and practice of that court, when he contemplated the anxiety which it had always manifested to maintain its rank as protector of

the North of Europe, and the tenacity with which it still fondly wished to cling to that character, he could not suppose a case in which every feeling of its pride and ambition could be so completely gratified as in the submission of our differences with Denmark to the mediation of Russia as arbitress of the North. She could thus say to herself, The sea, of which I am protectress, has been violated; but those who have violated it are placed in my hands, subject to my mediation. This was the light in which he was confident the application to Russia to mediate would be considered by every person who was a friend to the true interests of Russia, and it was so considered, until the overbearing influence of General Savary altered the tone of the Russian cabinet. But it had been said, why not attack Cronstadt, and insult the emperor in his own capital? There was a great party, or rather the majority of the bettermost people in Russia, who were anxious for British connexion; but whatever might be the partialities of such persons, they must all feel for the honour and glory of their country, and therefore it could not be desirable to destroy, by an unprofitable attack upon the national feelings, the nascent popularity of this country. We had the right unquestionably, but it was a different question, whether under the circumstances of the case we ought to exercise it: besides, the object was not worth the cost and pain of the undertaking, and the execution of it would have infallibly disgusted those who would be likely to bring back Russia to her real interests. Those gentlemen, who admitted that a knowledge of the designs of France, and of the weakness of Denmark, would justify the expedition, seemed to forget the admission, and to urge the broad principles. It was undoubtedly just, that if there were a community of states in Europe, the weaker states ought to be as secure from aggression as the more powerful one. This was a principle which had never been denied. But gentlemen applied this principle, which properly belonged to that state of Europe, in which the rights of all were secured by the sanctity of public law; and even the weakest were preserved from aggression or insult, if not by immediate protection, at least by conflicting interests. But, in the enthusiasm of the right hon. gentleman's morality, it was rather strange that he should have forgotten the moralities of the French re-

volution. In the present state of the world, whatever miseries might be produced, whatever calamities endured, whatever atrocities committed, by the permission of that Providence in whom we live, breathe, and have our being, the whole responsibility must rest upon him who is the sole author of them. There was not now a community of states in Europe, connected by the solemnity and sanction of public law, protecting and protected by the influence of the principles of equal justice, and a mutual sense of reciprocal rights; there was but one devouring state, that swallowed up every one that it could bring within its grasp, and that, so far from respecting the rights and independence of other nations, reduced all to indiscriminate subjection, rendering them alike subservient to its designs against this country. Buonaparte now dictated to all the nations of the continent, and had erased every vestige of public law in Europe. He could not but be surprised then, to find gentlemen, when censuring a measure which had proved the salvation of the country, [hear, hear!]—he should repeat, that it had saved us from the imminent dangers that menaced us, and therefore it was that he was surprised to hear gentlemen compare such a measure with antiquated crimes in which we had no share, for which we had incurred no responsibility. Was it to be contended, that in a moment of imminent danger and impending necessity, we should have abstained from that course which prudence and policy dictated, in order to meet and avert those calamities that threatened our security and existence, because, if we sunk under the pressure, we should have the consolation of having the authority of Puffendorf to plead? But the conduct that had been adopted on this occasion was not without precedent or example. In the year 1801, the island of Madeira had been taken possession of by our government for fear it should fall into the hands of the French. Yet Portugal was a neutral nation, and had always, by way of pre-eminence, been styled the old and ancient ally of England. The capture of Madeira had been effected without any previous communication to the court of Lisbon. Undoubtedly, instructions had been sent to our minister at the court of Lisbon, to request that an order should be sent to the governor to surrender the island in good will. The instructions arrived at Lisbon about the time that the troops

arrived at Madeira, and the island was consequently taken by force, before any orders could have been sent out to surrender it. Where had Portugal at that time a fleet that could convey troops for the invasion of these islands, or if she had that fleet, what expedition could be sent by her that would not be defeated by the valour and intrepidity of our seamen? He did not mean to condemn the capture of that island, because he knew that it might be, and he had no doubt that it was, justifiable upon the grounds of probable necessity; he adverted to the transaction only as a defence against the generality of the charge. But this was not the only instance in which such conduct had been practised to neutral states, in which it had been used towards neutral and friendly powers; nay, even there was an instance in which it had been adopted by morality itself towards a friendly state. In the year 1806, there had been reports of its being the intention of the French government to invade Portugal. He had himself no doubt of the perpetual intention of the French government to prosecute that purpose, and he did not question that the design might have been in contemplation at that time, but it did not appear that any army was assembled for the purpose at Bayonne. He admired the conduct which had been adopted by the late ministers on the occasion, he applauded their spirit, and he felt gratitude for the manner in which their proceeding enabled him to meet the general question on this charge. Here the right hon. secretary read an extract from the instructions given by the late Board of Admiralty to Earl St. Vincent, when despatched to Lisbon. The instructions directed the noble admiral's attention to three objects; 1st, if the Portuguese government should, by itself, or in conjunction with Spain, be disposed to defend the country against the French, to promise all the assistance that Great Britain could afford, and the presence of a respectable naval force in the Tagus would contribute to that object; 2dly, if that should not be the determination of the court, and the government should embrace the resolution of emigrating to the Brazils, as it had once proposed during the late war, to offer them the assistance of a British naval force, under the protection of which alone that determination could be carried into effect; and, lastly, if there should not be vigour enough in the government to adopt either of these

resolutions, he was to prevent, if possible, the port of Lisbon from falling into the hands of the French, and at all events the Portuguese navy was to be secured; every vessel of which that was serviceable was to be brought off, together with the ships, goods, and persons of the British factory at Lisbon, and also the court, if it should be so disposed: for the execution of these instructions, the troops that were then embarking were to be sent to him with all convenient expedition, but he was not to give any intimation of the circumstance to the Portuguese government, nor to hold any language that might excite the suspicion of the French minister, or lead to any measures of precaution; and, as it might be necessary to employ the troops immediately on their arrival in order to secure a strong position, he was to have the marines and boats of the fleet constantly in readiness for that service. These instructions were clear in their tenor, precise in their object, and conclusive as to the question then under consideration. If any gentleman wished for the document, it would be laid on the table, and the only shyness that had been felt in producing it before was, that it would place him and his colleagues in a situation of convicted plagiarists [Hear, hear!] These were the instructions that had been given by morality itself, and the only difference between them and the instructions that had been given by the present government was, that the latter did not desire that the army should be introduced in disguise. But there might yet be one qualification that the right hon. gentleman would apply to Denmark, namely, that her conduct, when she was relatively strong to weaker neutral states, did not merit such a measure against her. What had that conduct been? When, in 1801, the maritime confederacy held out a prospect, that this country would not be able to protect its allies, Denmark treated the unprotected neutral state of Hamburgh with the most violent oppression, and for the purpose of excluding the English from that port. The same conduct had been pursued towards Ratzburg. This conduct proved that Denmark had no very strong claims for forbearance.—But it was rather strange, that those gentlemen, who blamed government for not having accepted the mediation of Russia, should now impute it as a ground of charge, that they had not passed by Copenhagen in order to attack Cronstadt. We had

the right to attack Russia, but had we no interest in forbearing to exercise that right? There were, at the time, in the ports of Russia 500 British ships, and 6000 British seamen; and gentlemen would perceive, that these formed too important an object to be hazarded for the sake of the few hulks that might be obtained at Cronstadt: besides, the fleet which Russia had in the Mediterranean was a security to us for her good behaviour. And here he would take occasion to contradict a misrepresentation that had taken place upon the subject of this fleet. The Russian squadron did not enter the Tagus by order from the government, but from sheer distress, and because all the ports of the enemy were so closely blockaded by our squadrons, that they could not enter any one of them. This squadron was first directed to touch at aBritish port, and even the Russian ambassador was so deceived with respect to it, that he had kept here a frigate with specie on board for the payment of that very fleet. But, if that fleet had been attacked, what an argument might yet be drawn against the precipitancy of such a measure, from the circumstance of the squadron having been directed to touch at a British port, and the Russian ambassador having detained the frigate with the specie for the pay of the crews! He had intentionally avoided referring to any thing in this debate but what was notorious; and if they were to ask why they had rested their defence upon precise information, when the events and facts that had since taken place had amply justified their measure, he would answer, that they had stated that precise ground because it was true, and not because they thought it necessary to their justification in judging of the case before the house. If any more evidence should be thought necessary, let them be condemned, for nothing should ever extort from them the source whence they had derived their information. If gentlemen should say, that this course was contrary to the practice of parliament, he would go to the journals, to prove that it was not out of the usual course of parliamentary proceedings. Having rescued the country from a great and imminent danger, he would trust the case as it stood, and he had no doubt but that the conduct of ministers would be judged deserving of approbation. The house might judge of the extent of the service performed by contemplating the distribution of our naval force

that might be necessary if the Danish fleet were not now in our possession.—As to what the right hon. gent. had said of the increase of the danger of Sweden by the expedition, he could assure him that that danger was greatly diminished by that event, and so the government of Sweden felt it.—As the right hon. gentleman had alluded to a communication made by him to Mr. Rist, the Danish chargé d'affaires, he would briefly state the fact to the house. He had been commanded by his majesty, after the Danish fleet had been surrendered, to make an official communication to that gentleman, desiring that he might procure powers from the crown prince to negociate an accommodation, or to procure passports for a minister to go to Kiel for that purpose. This was all the official communication; he had, however, thought it right to inform Mr. Rist of the terms upon which the accommodation might be effected. He had mentioned then the period of three years, as that which might, after the conclusion of peace, enable us to form a judgment of the stability of the peace; and certainly those who had witnessed the last peace must be sensible, that the period was not too long; for in eighteen months after that peace, we were as much at war as before. Considering that we had gained possession of the fleet by force, he did not think the stipulation of such a term any insult, and he had proposed either to keep the fleet in deposit, or to take it in purchase. When he communicated this fact to the house, he thought it necessary to state why he did not produce the papers. As all negociations were resumed on the terms upon which they had been last broken off, and though he and his colleagues had thought it right to make such offers in that instance, it would not follow, that they should be disposed to grant the same conditions at a future period. In the hope of some such accommodation, his majesty had even been induced to delay directing the condemnation of the Danish shipping, as well as his declaration of war. He had no hesitation to add, that every stipulation had been required that could be necessary for the security of the Swedish territory. But now that war had taken place, it could not be contended that the capture of the Danish navy did not, pro tanto, diminish the means of the enemy, whilst it added to our means of security. Buonaparte well knew, that the maritime power of Great Bri-

tain was the only impediment to his universal aggrandisement. He would not cease, therefore, to exhaust all the means he possessed to accomplish the grand object of his ambition. The trial he would make, and it was only by making it, and its failure, that he was to be convinced of the inefficiency and fruitlessness of all his designs. He would destroy all commerce in order to injure this country, which he identified with it:

> 'Cedet et ipse mari vector: nec nautica pinus
> Mutabit merces.'—

But though he should direct the whole accumulated force of his vast territories to this purpose, he would find all his projects frustrated, until he could make all nations independent of commerce, in consequence of their own productions:

> 'Omnis feret omnia tellus.'

By the expedition to Copenhagen, the means of the enemy had been reduced, and the security of the country augmented. Those who thought the policy of that measure weak, and its execution unjust, would certainly vote against him. But he could not consider it a manly way to take the division upon the motion for papers, and not on the merits of the question, merely because some few would vote for the papers, who would not support a motion for censure. Conscious of the principles upon which he and his colleagues had acted, and of the advantages resulting to the country therefrom, trusting to the justice and the good sense of the house, for a confirmation of the universal sentiment of the country with regard to the conduct of his majesty's ministers upon the present transaction, he should submit to its decision, and meet the motion with a direct negative."—*Mr. Ponsonby's Motion relative to the Expedition to Copenhagen, Feb.* 3, 1808.

In this speech, the foreign secretary, in his zeal to press upon the opposition the *argumentum ad hominem*, grievously committed himself by the garbled extracts which he read from the papers of his predecessors, to which he had access by virtue of his

office. The friends of Lord Howick complained loudly of this conduct of Mr. Canning. Mr. Whitbread, the relative of the noble lord, stood up in his place in the house, and demanded justice for his noble friend. He showed, in the course of his accusatory speech, "on some occasions, when it served his purpose, the right hon. secretary had urged the great inconvenience of producing diplomatic papers; but he had not found it inconvenient to make such partial extracts from papers in his possession as might enable him to attain his purpose of gaining a vote of the house, even though such extracts gave a totally different colouring to that which the papers not thus garbled would have had.

"If the right hon. secretary had given a false impression, as he contended that he had, by his partial quotations, he had neither done his duty to the public, to those persons connected with the late administration, nor to the much-injured Danes; for he should always view them in that light. There was one way of doing justice, however, and only one, and that was, to lay before the public the despatches from which he had made such garbled quotations. At the same time, while he demanded this act of justice, he was authorized by his noble relative to declare, that he would rather be contented to suffer in his character and feelings, than that the public service should be injured by any disclosure; but he was at the same time authorized to say, that his noble relative was of opinion, that no inconvenience would arise from laying the papers before the house."

Mr. Canning replied; but not in a manner the most satisfactory. He resisted the motion, and declared that—

"His chief objection to the present motion arose from this principle, that it would go to establish a precedent for publishing all papers and foreign despatches whatever. The depositaries of the public confidence must judge in every instance, whether

they ought to be produced or not. There would be no end to distrust, and from the sample which was now exhibited, there would be no end to the demand and production of papers. To the jealousy which the hon. gentleman had discovered, no other exposition of papers would be satisfactory, but that of putting him into the Foreign Office, and letting him rummage at pleasure. With regard to the despatches of Lord Howick, it was highly probable that the noble lord had copies of them in his own possession; but if not, he should be happy to furnish him with copies from the Foreign Office."

Mr. Whitbread returned to the charge with all his characteristic force.

"He congratulated the house on the idea, that whether they lost the motion or not, it would have the good effect of preventing the right hon. gentleman from again making use of garbled letters. The chancellor of the exchequer had clearly shown, that he had never had a cause in a court of justice, in which he found it so difficult to defend his client; for all he could say in his behalf was, that he did not mean to draw that inference which others had done for him. The right hon. gentleman had said, 'does the noble lord mean to say, that I have cast any imputation on him by reading his letter?' He would answer for the noble lord, yes,—the imputation of holding one language while in office, and another when out of it, and, in so doing, palming an imposition on that house and the public. Ministers and the noble lord were, then, at issue: produce the paper."

Mr. Whitbread concluded by saying, that—

"If the right honourable secretary, when he read the passage he had selected from the noble lord's letter, and at the end of which he was so heartily cheered, had but given one single word more—the word *but*—with the same emphasis that he concluded the sentence preceding it, that word *but* would have effectually knocked down all those cheers, by showing that the opinion conveyed was directly contrary to that he wished to have believed. If no other man in the house

would bring it forward, he would himself move for a vote of censure; for never was censure so abundantly merited."

In the debate on the orders of council, we find Mr. Canning contending for a clause which should exclude jesuits' bark from France and the continent, and thus expose the enemy to the dreadful ravages of dysentery and other diseases peculiarly incident to armies, and for the cure of which the bark in question is deemed a specific. This exposed him to unmeasured ridicule. He must deserve a patent for expedients who could thus ingeniously contrive, by an order of council, to conquer an enemy that was invincible in the field. The clause was carried in both houses; but the dissentients recorded a protest which is equally worthy of their wisdom and their humanity. The following is its first assigned reason:

"Because the jesuits' bark, the exportation of which is prohibited by this bill, has been found by long experience to be a specific for many dangerous diseases, which war has a tendency to spread and to exasperate; and because to employ as an engine of war the privation of the only remedy for some of the greatest sufferings which war is capable of inflicting, is manifestly repugnant to the principles of the christian religion, contrary to humanity, and not justified by any practice of civilized nations."

The system of withholding from parliament the documentary information, which, in the case of Copenhagen, had been carried to so great an excess, was not permitted by the opposition to remain undisturbed. Mr. Sheridan followed Mr. Whitbread with a motion on the subject, but more extended in its object; and he concluded a most eloquent speech, in which he moved for all the official papers relating to the Co-

penhagen expedition, which could be produced with safety to the interests of the country, by putting it to the house—

"Whether it would sanction the new system of withholding all information relative to the measures of ministers. If it did, it would be better to decide at once, that the interference of that house was at all times an impediment to the operations of government; that parliament was a nuisance in difficult times; that it would be better for the king to prorogue it during pleasure, raise money as he pleases, and make war or peace when, how, or on what terms he may think proper. He implored ministers, however, to give up the detestable system upon which they had lately been endeavouring to act; namely, that of fighting Buonaparte with his own weapons. They would do much better to continue to fight with those weapons which the nation was better accustomed to handle. Let them oppose lenity and moderation to his cruelty and oppression; let them oppose good faith to his treachery and duplicity; to his violence and despotism let them oppose the mildness of the British constitution; and, above all, to his mystery let them oppose publicity."

Mr. Canning replied at some length. At the commencement of his defence of ministers, the right hon. secretary said:

"He was not ashamed to confess, that he at all times felt considerable difficulty in disagreeing from his right hon. friend; and that, in this instance, his difficulty was much increased, not by the line of argument adopted by his right hon. friend, but by the humour with which he had treated subjects stated to be atrocious, and the gravity with which he had dwelt upon things trifling and unimportant. The right hon. gentleman had set out with a discussion of the particular benefits of the British constitution, which he contrasted with the practice of despotic governments. But his right hon. friend had pushed this contrast to a greater extent than any writer or speaker with whom he was acquainted. His right hon. friend had said, that

his majesty's ministers were preserving the gloom of despotism upon every transaction, upon which they did not, shortly after the transaction took place, or whilst the consequences were yet flowing from it, give the fullest information to the house, and through that house to the public, and through the public to the enemy, by which the enemy might be enabled to defeat the objects of them. He had always thought that the constitution had solved that problem, which his right hon. friend seemed to think insoluble, by enabling that house to steer between difficulties, and by uniting the promptness of the executive with the salutary corrective of its popular branch. But the extremity to which his right hon. friend had pushed his proposition was not to be maintained in argument or in fact, and the former of his motions allowed the principle, which the whole tenor of his speech went to invalidate. His right hon. friend had complained of the sparingness with which his majesty's ministers granted papers; but he was sure his right hon. friend must be convinced, that papers had been laid upon the table this session in greater masses than upon any former occasion. It began to be the feeling of the house, that he and his colleagues had granted too many papers, and that the few which remained in the public offices should be retained there, if not for the guidance of future ministers, at least for the service of future oppositions."

Mr. Canning concluded by saying:

"His right hon. friend had indulged the exuberant fancy of his classic mind, by giving garbled extracts from Latin poets, by way of quotation; such as—'Ridiculum acri quid vetat.'—If he was inclined to retort a quotation on his right hon. friend, it would, he thought, be strictly allowable to him to say,—'Arma virumque cano—fas est et ab hoste doceri.'—Buonaparte, whatever might be his cruelties, his oppressions, or his aggressions, had, on all occasions, scrupulously adhered to and protected those who had entered into alliance with him: he had never sacrificed an ally to any consideration, however pressing or important. Ministers were that night called on to give up the correspondence of our only ally, which could not fail of being

attended with great inconvenience; and he would, therefore, so far follow the example of the enemy as to adhere to our ally, and to refuse his assent to his right hon. friend's motion."

The tone of the ministers in this debate was considerably lowered; and on the very next night Mr. Canning had to endure the mortification of being himself the proposer of the very measure he had so pertinaciously resisted. In moving for the production of the papers which had been so unreasonably withheld, Mr. Canning said:

"His object was, by producing the documents, to correct those misconstructions which had been put upon his conduct and language in that instance. As he did not feel it necessary to make any further observation on the subject of the motion, he should barely move, that an humble address be presented to his majesty," &c.

Mr. Tierney severely reflected upon this conduct of the right hon. secretary and his colleagues:

"He felt compassion (he said) for the right hon. gentleman opposite, whom he beheld in the pitiable situation of being called upon now to vote for what they had rejected but two or three weeks since. This was the first instance in which such a proceeding had taken place in parliament. The right hon. gentleman had first resisted the production of the papers on public grounds, and afterwards when called for on private grounds, for the justification of his noble friend (Lord Howick); but now that the right hon. gentleman's own character was touched, he was ready to produce the papers. He was glad the right hon. gentleman at length showed such a laudable attention to character, and thought it worth preserving. But, leaving private character out of the question, he saw no reason why more attention should be paid to the character of the right hon. gentleman than to that of his noble predecessor, who had served his majesty in the same office, with as much fidelity as the right hon. gentleman. The effect of the proceeding of the right

hon. gentleman would be to show that that house was the instrument of the secretary of state. Had any thing occurred since the former vote, to show that there was less danger in the production of the papers now than at that period? The character of Mr. Garlike, to whom public character must be so dear, could not be justified but by the production of all the papers. If the right hon. gentleman should not consent to that, he would compromise the character of the house by the refusal. Let the house see in that the danger of raising men too high, let them see the degraded and disgraced state to which they would be reduced, and which would sink them in the estimation of their country, and perhaps of the sovereign himself. (A loud cry of Order!)"

The important question involved in these discussions was destined to undergo still further investigation, and to visit the ministers, especially Mr. Canning, with the severity of censure. Mr. Adam, in a very elaborate speech, discussed the law of parliament relative to official communications. In this speech, the honourable and learned gentleman assumed a principle, which he established on the strongest constitutional grounds, namely, that all documents in the possession of a secretary of state are with him a sacred deposit, on no account to be introduced into a discussion in parliament, either in whole or in part, unless they are required by a vote of the house, or communicated by the express command of the king. Any deviation from this principle, Mr. Adam contended, in a constitutional point of view, was obviously of the most fatal tendency,

"Because it might be converted into an engine of dangerous influence upon the proceedings of the house on the part of the king. The fact, therefore, having happened, it was incumbent upon the house to come to some resolution respecting it, which

would prevent it from again recurring. There was also another point of view, in which the conduct of the right hon. secretary appeared to be highly censurable, namely, in disclosing the secrets of his office, without the command or permission of his sovereign. The great officers of state were bound by law to the most profound secrecy in the exercise of the trust reposed in them, and they could not be absolved from this obligation of secrecy, excepting by command of the sovereign. A secretary of state had no more right, of his own accord, to disclose the contents of any despatch, with which he was intrusted, than a person picking it up by accident would have to publish it. The interference of the house, therefore, was essentially necessary on the present occasion, as well to mark its disapprobation of the misconduct of one of the servants of the crown, in his official capacity, as to secure the regularity of its own proceedings, and the independence of parliament. On these grounds, Mr. Adam concluded with moving the following resolutions: '1. That it appears to this house, that one of his majesty's principal secretaries of state did read to this house despatches, and parts of despatches, and other communications, to and from the accredited ministers of this country at foreign courts, relative to the subjects of their missions; and that he has stated and read other matters respecting the transactions of this country with foreign powers, none of which were then communicated to this house by his majesty's commands, and some of which this house has determined to be unfit to be produced. 2. That such conduct is subversive of the ancient and approved usages of parliament, is destructive of fair discussion and decision, and has a direct tendency to injure the public interest, by making the resolutions of this house proceed on inaccurate statements, which it cannot correct by reference to the documents from which those statements are made; or to force on the consideration of this house papers which, in its wisdom, it may deem unfit for public production. And further, That such conduct is contrary to the trust which is reposed by the constitution in the confidential servants of the crown.'"

Mr. Canning's justification of himself on this occasion was happy and conclusive, so far as he was sanc-

tioned by precedents. The special pleading, and the retaliation, make but little impression in meeting the general argument. The constitution is undoubtedly with Mr. Adam. But Mr. Canning had to make out a case. He did it with great judgment and ability. In conclusion, he stated that, as a high criminal charge was preferred against him, he should withdraw, and throw himself upon the justice of the house. He withdrew accordingly. Mr. Adam felt himself stung to the quick by certain personal allusions in Mr. Canning's speech; and he replied with warmth, if not with acrimony. The motion, of course, was negatived. But it was not so much the charge of gratuitously bringing forward official documents that displeased his majesty's ministers. It was the incessant and harassing calls made by the opposition for papers which they were unwilling to produce. This means of attack was indeed so often resorted to, that it began to threaten the most serious consequences to the operations of government; and on a motion of Mr. Whitbread for the production of papers relating to Russia, the foreign secretary repelled it with a manly and disinterested firmness.

"He would fairly state (said Mr. Canning), that he had hitherto abstained from speaking on the subject, because, whatever might have been the course of the debate, if it had been possible that the argument of the hon. gentleman should have influenced the house, or that the arguments of his noble friend should not have influenced the house on what he conceived to be the clear question before them; if the inclination of the house had shown itself to be unfavourable to his view of the subject; he should then have stood up, not merely to argue against the motion, but to entreat the house, that if they did not place in him that confidence, without which it was impos-

sible for him adequately to fulfil the duties of his situation, they would permit him to retire, retaining his honour. Not one spark of that honour should he conceive be retained, if he were to divulge that which at the time when it was communicated, and since, and now, he felt, was communicated in confidence. Under that impression, however great the deference which he entertained for the house, and however anxious he was to bow to their decision, were that decision to call for the production of the paper in question, he would rather incur their displeasure than thus compromise his own honour and character."

In the course of his speech, Mr. Canning indulged in rather free remarks on the honourable mover, charging him with arrogance and a dictatorial tone, and treating with some levity Dr. Laurence, who had taken very angry notice of some things which had been uttered by former speakers, derogatory of Mr. Whitbread. At the close of the discussion, Mr. Whitbread avenged himself by observing that—

"If there was any thing dictatorial in his manner, he was sure that such manner could less become any man in that house than himself, who had so few pretensions to assume it. As a member of parliament, however, he did arrogate great privileges, and he never would allow those privileges to be derogated from by those who in the most dictatorial manner charged him with being dictatorial, and who in the most arrogant manner accused him of arrogance. To the right hon. secretary, who had treated him with so much freedom, he would say, that the vices of his manner were levity and misrepresentation. The first was manifested in the mode in which that right hon. gentleman jeered his hon. and learned friend near him (Dr. Laurence), one ounce of whose sterling worth he would not exchange for all the gilt gingerbread on the other side of the house. Of the second vice of his manner, misrepresentation, he had given a striking instance, by introducing a debate on papers, before the papers were laid on the table, and by pronouncing a panegyric, before the house was in possession of the means of ascertaining

whether that panegyric was well or ill founded. He could not see the necessity under which the right hon. secretary would labour of resigning, were his motion agreed to. That dreadful calamity to the country surely need not take place; but, dreadful as it would be, he owned he would rather see the right hon. gentleman quit office in that manner, than that he should be turned out by the dark junto which lurked about the throne."

The appointment of Dr. Duigenan to be a privy counsellor, at this juncture, stamped the character of the administration. Moderate men of all parties viewed it as a wanton assault upon the feelings and prejudices of the people of Ireland, as well as a fearful indication of the violent and ultra measures which they were likely to adopt. This appointment was in the true spirit of insolent defiance, and was worthy of the cold-blooded viscount, and his intolerant colleague, the chancellor of the exchequer. But Mr. Canning was doomed to share in the deep disgrace. Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning were both in the house during the debate on Mr. Buchan's motion on the subject; and they could remain silent under the following cutting observations of Mr. Tierney and Mr. Curwen. Mr. Tierney said:

"He would have wished much to have heard some of his majesty's ministers undertake to defend the present appointment. All that he knew of the learned doctor who was the object of it was, that he understood him to be a man whose life had been occupied in religious contentions; and that all the sentiments which he had delivered in that house were given in such a manner, and carried to so extravagant a length, that he believed there was not a single member in the house who would venture to say that he concurred with him. The learned doctor had long held the office which he now held, and it was never before thought necessary to raise him to the rank of privy counsellor. What could be the motive, then, of such an appoint-

ment at the present time? or how could his majesty's ministers suppose that, in recommending such an appointment, they were cherishing that unity and harmony which it appeared to be his majesty's earnest desire to cultivate? He wished to hear some of his majesty's ministers state for what merits the learned doctor had been recommended. The sort of defence of the appointment which the right hon. secretary for Ireland (Sir A. Wellesley) had made, was any thing but complimentary to the learned doctor. He had stated that his power of doing mischief would be very limited, and that he would only be called upon for his advice on ecclesiastical questions. But what security was there for the house and the country that the learned doctor would abstain from any of the duties of a privy counsellor? As soon as he was appointed, he might think it his duty to offer his advice on all subjects, and there could be very little doubt of the tendency of his advice, if it were followed. The catholics of Ireland had no quarter to look to but that house, and he conceived that it was the duty of the house to address his majesty, praying him not to listen to little narrow-minded bigots, but to the general voice of his people. A noble lord (Castlereagh) and a right hon. gentleman (Mr. Canning) appeared this night in a situation peculiarly awkward. It was the boast of the right hon. gentleman to be the representative of the opinions of Mr. Pitt. He would venture to say, that if Mr. Pitt were living, he would be ashamed of such an appointment as would raise the learned doctor to the rank of a privy counsellor, and that he would never have lent himself to that little contemptible system of irritating a people, which the present administration appeared to have adopted. It would be hard for them to prove, that the promotion of Dr. Duigenan was an object equal to the tranquillity of four millions of subjects. It would be hard for them to persuade the catholics of Ireland that they had nothing to fear from those prejudices which had dictated the writings and the speeches of the learned doctor. It appeared to him to be a pure, wanton, and gratuitous insult to the feelings of the catholics of Ireland. He thought it was impossible that there could be any justification for it, and that it was a symptom of a general system to be adopted against the rights and against the feelings of the catholics of Ireland."

Mr. Curwen said:

"If the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Canning) ever had any portion of the respect of the house or the public, he must or ought to have forfeited it by his present conduct. When the world saw that house debating in the manner they had done this night, it was impossible not to think that if the people had energy, the ministers had none. There was a secret influence in the cabinet of this country, which Mr. Pitt would have spurned at, and which any man who had been, as the right hon. gentleman pretended to be, in his confidence, and emulated his conduct, must equally have despised."

This discussion took place on the 11th of May. On the 20th, the expedition to the Dardanelles drew from the foreign secretary a long official reply, which, as usual, was made to *tell* against the late ministers. The Roman catholic petition, which was discussed on the 25th, evinced, on the part of Mr. Canning, an ardent solicitude to elude the question, and, if possible, to let it quietly pass off without a debate. He began by complimenting Mr. Grattan, and observed, that—

"If he and his colleagues wished to go to a silent vote on this question, it was certainly not from any want of disposition to show respect to the right hon. gentleman who had brought forward the business in so able, eloquent, and candid a manner, but rather from a perfect coincidence in some of the sentiments most particularly impressed by the right hon. gentleman, and a desire to give the vote he should feel it his duty to give, in the manner most consistent with the right hon. gentleman's recommendation. Whoever should come in aid of the right hon. gentleman could certainly not be looked forward to as a more powerful antagonist. There were many strong reasons why the extension of this discussion should not be wished for."

"The grounds (he continued, towards the close of his speech) on which the right hon. gentleman called for a committee, were

precisely the same that were urged without success on a former occasion, and they had received no addition of strength since. He could not look back to the recent decision on this point, the right hon. gentleman himself could not look back to it, without being convinced that an inoffensive refusal would produce less mischief than a reluctant and forced assent. Let any body who knew the state of the public mind in this country, say, whether there was not a strong prevailing sentiment against further concessions to the catholics? If this was founded in reason, it was not easily to be overcome; but if it was even founded only on prejudice, the right hon. gentleman was well aware that such prejudices did not yield to repeated attacks of reason, any more than the prejudices on the other side to penal laws. It would be of little value to have a majority for the measure in the house, if there was an inflamed majority against it out of the house. If there should be a disappointment in the present instance, there would be a consolation in reflecting, that the object of the motion must ultimately, though gradually, prevail. He was unwilling to mix personal topics in this debate. The right hon. gentleman had very scrupulously abstained from such topics; and with him, at least, the catholic question would never be a party question. But he feared some of those who would follow the right hon. gentleman would take another course; and if there was any thing that made him regret having risen so early in the debate, it was the depriving himself thereby of the opportunity of meeting those personal charges, which he certainly had no dread of encountering. The right hon. gentleman's speech was so happily constructed and directed, that whether his motion succeeded or failed, it must do eminent service. There was one principle of the right hon. gentleman, however, which must be received with some reserve. When the legislature limited by law the share of political power to be held by any class of men, and it was proposed to repeal that limitation, the legislature was to judge of the propriety of complying with the proposition; and if more disorder would arise from the repeal than from the continuance of the limitation, it was right to continue it. He again recommended the soothing and conciliating system proposed by the right hon. gentleman, and trusted that more benefit would be obtained by sending back

the petition without any irritating language, than even by referring it to the committee, by means of a violent and contentious majority. On these grounds, he should give his vote conscientiously against the motion,—with this satisfaction, that nothing that had been hitherto said could be a bar to the claims of the petitioners in future."

When Mr. Canning sat down, Mr. Windham facetiously observed:

"The speech of the right hon. gentleman who has just sat down strongly reminds me of what Lord Chesterfield says in one of his letters, when speaking of the tragedy of Cato. That accomplished nobleman, when criticising the tragedy of Cato, remarks that there is nothing in the two beautiful lines with which the poem opens—

'The dawn is overcast, the morning lowers,
'And heavily in clouds brings on the day—'

that there is nothing in all this but what a watchman tells us when he calls out 'Past four o'clock, and a cloudy morning!' Just so with the right hon. gentleman's speech—with all its exuberant eloquence, we find nothing but an assurance, that the discussion will be extremely inconvenient to himself and his friends, and that therefore it ought to be deprecated."

The affairs of Spain became at this time a subject of deep interest in the British cabinet and throughout the nation. The unprincipled, the unparalleled aggressions of the perfidious and sanguinary tyrant that swayed the sceptre of France, and held in his mighty grasp the trembling destinies of Europe, excited universal detestation. The Spanish nation, indeed, had suffered long and severely from misgovernment. A heartless adulteress, with her despicable minion, had presented to her the last dregs of the cup of degradation; and the worthy successor of the imbecile Charles was to be the beloved Ferdinand; a tyrant and a bi-

got as faithless and as cruel as any Bourbon of them all, without either dignity or understanding, gratitude or justice. In short, Spain was in such a state, that nothing could render it worse but precisely that which happened; the having France for an ally, and Buonaparte for a friend. Let those who are accustomed to invest the name of Buonaparte with a character of greatness, and to seek for apologies for his crimes in the necessity of his circumstances, read the History of the Peninsular War, and their admiration will be exchanged for abhorrence; nor will they any longer regret the reverses of his fortune, or the miseries of his exile. When we reflect on the noble struggles of the Spanish nation, and the glorious deliverance which, by their unheard-of privations and sufferings, they achieved for themselves, we cannot contemplate without disgust and indignation the state of vassalage to which they have returned, and the galling yoke which their ungrateful master has imposed upon their necks; and we can only console ourselves, with Dr. Southey, when he saw French tyranny was at its height, by placing our firm reliance upon the moral order of the world; believing that the triumph of evil principles can only endure for a time, and that no system can be permanent which is founded upon irreligion, injustice, and violence. The doctor's anticipations, no doubt, were realized, when the beloved and legitimate Ferdinand returned; or when the battle of Waterloo sent the modern Attila, the Scourge of God, to St. Helena. For our parts, we still think that despotism is a poor exchange for anarchy, and that nothing is achieved for the human race while the will of tyrants is the only law of states.

The affairs of Spain were introduced to the notice of parliament by Mr. Sheridan: they had from the beginning engaged the attention of the government. In the course of his speech, the right hon. gentleman highly complimented Mr. Canning. He was evidently favourable to the attitude of menace which the ministry assumed against the Spoiler of nations; and concluded with the following observations:

"I am far from wishing ministers to embark in any rash and romantic enterprise in favour of Spain; but, sir, if the enthusiasm and animation which now exists in a part of Spain should spread over the whole of that country, I am convinced that, since the first burst of the French revolution, there never existed so happy an opportunity for Great Britain to strike a bold stroke for the rescue of the world. But, sir, it is said, 'if you do not distrust the administration, why discuss this subject in parliament?' Sir, I will tell you why. I am disposed to trust administration. But I wish to demand two things: I wish first to declare, that, in my opinion, we must not deal in dribblets; we must do much, or nothing. Why do I make this declaration? Because no cabinet which has hitherto existed in this country—not even excepting that with which I had the honour of being connected—has pursued simply and plainly one clear and distinct object. Instead of striking at the core of the evil, the administrations of this country have hitherto contented themselves with nibbling at the rind. In this censure, I must not include an hon. friend near me, nor Mr. Burke. They would have proceeded directly and completely to the object which they had in view, or they would not have advanced to it a step. But, with these exceptions, the ministers of England have pursued a petty policy; they have gone about filching sugar islands, and neglecting all that was dignified and all that was consonant to the truly understood interests of their country. I wish therefore, sir, to let Spain know, that the conduct which we have pursued we will not persevere in, but that we are resolved fairly and fully to stand up for the salvation of Europe. The next demand I have to make, sir, is, that if a co-operation

with Spain be expedient, it should be an effectual co-operation. I repeat, that I am far from prompting his majesty's government to engage in any rash romantic enterprise; but, if upon ascertaining the state of the popular mind in Spain, they find it is warmed by a patriotic and enthusiastic ardour, then, sir, all I ask is, that that feeling should be met here with corresponding energy and enthusiasm. Buonaparte has hitherto run a most victorious race. Hitherto he has had to contend against princes without dignity, and ministers without wisdom. He has fought against countries in which the people have been indifferent as to his success; he has yet to learn what it is to fight against a country in which the people are animated with one spirit to resist him. So far, sir, from bringing forward a motion prematurely to embarrass his majesty's government, I solemnly declare, that, if the opportunity to which I have alluded of a vigorous interference on the part of England should arise, the present administration shall have from me as cordial and as sincere a support as if the man whom I most loved were restored to life and power. Is this a vain discussion? Let those who think so look at the present state of Europe. Will not the animation of the Spanish mind be excited by the knowledge that their cause is espoused, not by ministers alone, but by the parliament and the people of England? If there be a disposition in Spain to resent the insults and the injuries, too enormous to be described by language, which they have endured from the tyrant of the earth, will not that disposition be roused to the most sublime exertion, by the assurance that their efforts will be cordially aided by a great and powerful nation? Sir, I think this a most important crisis. Never was any thing so brave, so generous, so noble, as the conduct of the Asturians. They have magnanimously avowed their hostility to France, they have declared war against Buonaparte; they have no retreat; they are resolved to conquer, or to perish in the grave of the honour and the independence of their country. It is that the British government may advance to their assistance with a firmer step, and with a bolder mien, that I have been anxious to afford this opportunity to the British parliament of expressing the feelings which they entertain on the occasion. I move, sir, 'That an humble address be presented to his majesty, that

he will be graciously pleased to direct, that there be laid before this house copies of such proclamations as have been received by his majesty's secretary of state for foreign affairs, and which have been issued since the arrival of the French army at Madrid; whether by the Spanish government, the French commander-in-chief, or by persons since claiming to act on behalf of the Spanish nation.'"

To this proposition it was not deemed wise or politic to accede. Mr. Canning's reply is in the true spirit of conciliation. There is a kindness and liberality about it that, as we read, we cannot help exclaiming, "*O si sic omnia!*" After complimenting Mr. Sheridan for his moderation and his lofty patriotism—a patriotism which sought the glory of his country in the freedom and happiness of the world—the right hon. secretary proceeded to declare that the speech of his right hon. friend—

"Calls for such a general disclosure of the sentiments of his majesty's ministers as may be made without hazard, without a dishonourable compromise, and without exciting expectations which may never be realised. It is therefore, sir, I declare to the house and to the country, that his majesty's ministers see with as deep and lively an interest as my right hon. friend, the noble struggle which a part of the Spanish nation is now making to resist the unexampled atrocity of France, and to preserve the independence of their country; and that there exists the strongest disposition on the part of the British government to afford every practicable aid in a contest so magnanimous. In endeavouring to afford this aid, sir, it will never occur to us to consider that a state of war exists between Spain and Great Britain. We shall proceed upon the principle, that any nation of Europe that starts up with a determination to oppose a power which, whether professing insidious peace or declaring open war, is the common enemy of all nations, whatever may be the existing political relations of that nation with Great Britain, becomes instantly our essential ally. In that event his majesty's

ministers will have three objects in view. The first, to direct the united efforts of the two countries against the common foe; the second, to direct those efforts in a way which shall be most beneficial to the new ally; the third, to direct them in a manner conducive to peculiarly British interests. But, sir, of those objects, the last will be out of the question as compared with the other two. These are the sentiments with which his majesty's government are inspired. To the measures which these sentiments may dictate they confidently look for the support of parliament and of the country. It cannot, sir, be expected that I should say whether we think the crisis arrived, or whether we anticipate its speedy approach, when the sentiments which I have described must be called into action. It is sufficient that I have stated what we feel, and what we intend. For the reasons, sir, which I have before mentioned, I am compelled to dissent from my right hon. friend's motion."

Some exception having been taken against Mr. Canning's statement in this speech, regarding British objects, the hon. gentleman explained, in a very characteristic sentence, as noble in principle as it is elegant in construction.

"He had mentioned British objects on that occasion, for the purpose only of disclaiming them as any part of the considerations which influenced his majesty's government. In this contest in which Spain was embarked, no interest could be so purely British as Spanish success; no conquest so advantageous for Great Britain, as conquering from France the complete integrity of the dominions of Spain in every quarter of the world."

Towards the autumn of the year, the circumstances of Europe disclosed more and more the perfidious and arrogant character of Buonaparte. In September, he reviewed the soldiers he had recalled from Prussia and Poland. "They consisted not of Frenchmen alone" (says Southey), "but of Germans and Italians, Poles, Swiss, and Dutch, *Irish* and Mamalukes, men of all

countries and languages, of all religions and of none, united into one efficient body by the bond of discipline. They cared not whither they were ordered, so it were only to a land which produced the grape; upon what service, or in what cause, was to them a matter of indifference; war was their element, and wherever they went they expected to find free quarters, and no enemy who could resist them." These troops were destined to ravage the Peninsula, and to subject Spain and Portugal to the power of their tyrannical master. Previous to their departure, Buonaparte reviewed them at Paris. "Soldiers," said he, "after having triumphed on the banks of the Danube and the Vistula, you have passed through Germany by forced marches. I shall now order you to march through France, without allowing you a moment's rest. Soldiers, I have occasion for you! The hideous presence of the leopard * contaminates the continent

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* Was this caprice, or was the tyrant versed in antiquarian lore? There is great reason to believe that the arms of William the Conqueror and his successors were leopards. The old poet Drayton thus describes the arms of England:

"On the same part the' imperial standard fix'd,
With all the hatchments of the English crown;
Great Lancaster, with no less power enrich'd,
Sets the same *leopards* in his colours down."

The English arms are also, in Père Daniel's Life of Louis XI., described as leopards; and thence perhaps the verse of Racine:

"Sous nos lys triomphans briser les leopards."

It has been supposed that Henry I., following the example of Stephen, made a change in the English arms, and substituted

of Spain and Portugal. Let your aspect terrify and drive him from thence! Let us carry our conquering eagles even to the pillars of Hercules: there also we have an injury to avenge! Soldiers, you have exceeded the fame of all modern warriors. You have placed yourselves upon a level with the Roman legions, who, in one campaign, were conquerors on the Rhine, on the Euphrates, in Illyria, and on the Tagus. A durable peace and permanent prosperity shall be the fruits of your exertions. A true Frenchman can never enjoy any rest till the sea is open and free. Soldiers, all that you have already achieved, and that which remains to be done, will be for the happiness of the French people, and for my glory, and shall be for ever imprinted on my heart."

The preparations for war were answerable to the arrogance of this harangue. While this army was on its march, Buonaparte set out for Germany, to meet his dependent German princes and the emperor Alexander at Erfurth. Some of the performers of the *Théâtre Française* had orders to precede him, that these potentates might be provided with amusement. An opportunity was taken of giving Alexander a momentous hint of the superiority of his new friend: Buonaparte took him to the field of Jena; a temple, dedicated to Victory, was erected on the spot where the French emperor had passed the night previous to the battle; tents were pitched round it; and, after a

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the three lions for the two leopards. It is, however, more likely that the alteration took place in the time of the crusades, in order to avoid an obnoxious comparison to the apocalyptical leopard, to which Buonaparte perhaps maliciously referred.

sumptuous breakfast, he was led over every part of the ground which the two armies had occupied, and left to make his own reflections upon the spot where Prussia received the reward of its long subserviency to France, and of its neutrality when the fate of the continent was upon the hazard. The immediate consequence of the meeting was a proposal for peace to Great Britain. These overtures were made in the customary diplomatic forms; but they were accompanied by a joint letter from the emperors of France and Russia to the king of England. The letter of the two emperors was fully and most ably answered in an official note; which brings Mr. Canning before us in a new point of view, and in a way highly creditable to his honour and his talents.

"The king's readiness and desire to negociate a peace on terms consistent with his own honour, and with the permanent security of Europe, were again declared. If the condition of the continent were one of agitation and of wretchedness, if many states had been overthrown, and many more were still menaced with subversion, it was a consolation to the king to reflect, that no part of those convulsions could be in any degree imputable to him. Most willing was he to acknowledge that all such dreadful changes were indeed contrary to the policy of Great Britain. And if the cause of so much misery was to be found in the stagnation of commercial intercourse, although he could not be expected to hear with unqualified regret, that the system devised for the destruction of the commerce of his subjects had recoiled upon its authors or its instruments, yet it was neither in his disposition, nor in the character of the people over whom he reigned, to rejoice in the privations and unhappiness even of the nations which were combined against him. He anxiously desired the termination of the sufferings of the continent. The war in which he was engaged was entered into for the immediate object of national safety; but, in its progress, new obligations

had been imposed upon him, in behalf of powers whom the aggressions of a common enemy had compelled to make common cause with him, or who had solicited his assistance and support in the vindication of their national independence. The interests of Portugal and of Sicily were confided to his friendship and protection; and he was connected for peace, as well as for war, with the King of Sweden. To Spain he was not yet bound by any formal instrument, but he had, in the face of the world, contracted with that nation engagements not less sacred, and not less binding upon his mind, than the most solemn treaties. He therefore assumed, that, in an overture made to him for entering into negociations for a general peace, his relations subsisting with the Spanish monarchy had been distinctly taken into consideration, and that the government acting in the name of his catholic majesty, Ferdinand VII., was understood to be a party to any negociation in which he was invited to engage.

"The answer of the Russian minister was, that the admission of the sovereigns in alliance with England could not be a point of any difficulty; but this principle by no means extended to the necessity of admitting the plenipotentiaries of the Spanish insurgents, and the Emperor Alexander could not admit them. He had already acknowledged King Joseph Napoleon; he was united with the Emperor of the French; and he was resolved not to separate his interests from those of that monarch. But Count Romanzoff added, he saw, with pleasure, that, in this difference of opinion respecting the Spaniards, there was nothing which could either prevent or delay the opening of a congress; because his Britannic majesty had himself admitted, that he was bound to no positive engagement with those who had taken up arms in Spain. Count Romanzoff did not intend to insult a British king, by telling him he might violate his word and honour, because he was not bound to keep them by any formal instrument: but M. Champagny's reply was intentionally insulting. 'How,' said he, 'is it possible for the French government to entertain the proposal which has been made to it, of admitting the Spanish insurgents to the negociation? What would the English government have said, had it been proposed to them to admit the catholic insurgents of Ireland? France, without having any treaties with them, has been in communication with them, has made them promises, and has

frequently sent them succours.' The writer did not perceive what warning this utterly irrelevant argument held out to the disaffected in Ireland, by thus plainly informing them that, however Buonaparte might promise them support, he was at all times ready to abandon them, whenever it might suit his views. Menacing language was then introduced. England, we are told, would find herself under a strange mistake, if, contrary to the experience of the past, she still entertained the idea of contending successfully, upon the continent, against the armies of France. What hope could she have, especially when France was irrevocably united with Russia? France and Russia could carry on the war till the court of London recurred to just and equitable dispositions; they were resolved to do so; and the English were admonished not to lose sight of the inevitable results of the force of states.

"Mr. Canning's replies were equally decided and dignified. To Count Romanzoff he expressed the king's astonishment and regret, that it should be supposed he would consent to commence a negociation by the previous abandonment of the cause of the Spanish nation, and of the legitimate monarchy of Spain, in deference to an usurpation which had no parallel in the history of the world. He had hoped that the participation of the Emperor Alexander in these overtures would have afforded a security to him against the proposal of a condition so unjust in its effect, and so fatal in its example. Nor could he conceive by what obligation of duty or of interest, or by what principle of Russian policy, his imperial majesty could have found himself compelled to acknowledge the right assumed by France, of deposing and imprisoning friendly sovereigns, and forcibly transferring to herself the allegiance of loyal and independent nations. If these were indeed the principles to which the emperor had inviolably attached himself, to which he had pledged the character and resources of his empire, and which he had united himself with France to establish by war, and to maintain in peace; deeply did the King of England lament a determination by which the sufferings of Europe must be aggravated and prolonged: but not to him was to be attributed the continuance of the calamities of war, by the disappointment of all hope of such a peace as would be compatible with justice and with honour. To the French minister Mr. Canning said, he

was especially commanded to abstain from noticing any of those topics and expressions insulting to his majesty, to his allies, and to the Spanish nation, with which the official note of M. Champagny abounded. The King of England was desirous to have treated for a peace which might have arranged the respective interests of all the belligerent powers on principles of equal justice; but he was determined not to abandon the cause of the Spanish nation, and of the legitimate monarchy of Spain; and the pretension of France, to exclude from the negociation the central and supreme government, acting in the name of his catholic majesty, Ferdinand VII., was one which he could not admit, without acquiescing in an usurpation unparalleled in the history of the world.

"As soon as this correspondence was concluded, the rupture of the negociation was made known in England, by a declaration which, while any sense of honour remains in the English nation, may always be recollected with pride and satisfaction. The continued appearance of negociation, it said, when peace was found to be utterly unattainable, could be advantageous only to the enemy. It might enable France to sow distrust and jealousy in the councils of those who were combined to resist her oppression: and if, among the nations which were groaning under the tyranny of French alliance, or among those which maintained against France a doubtful and precarious independence, there should be any who were balancing between the certain ruin of a prolonged inactivity and the contingent dangers of an effort to save themselves from that ruin—to nations so situated, the delusive prospect of a peace between Great Britain and France could not fail to be peculiarly injurious. Their preparations might be relaxed, by the vain hope of returning tranquillity, or their purpose shaken, by the apprehension of being left to contend alone. That such was, in fact, the main object of France in the proposals transmitted from Erfurth, his majesty entertained a strong persuasion. But at a moment when results, so awful from their importance, and so tremendous from their uncertainty, might be depending upon the decision of peace or war, he felt it due to himself to ascertain, beyond the possibility of doubt, the views and intentions of his enemies. It was difficult for him to believe that the

Emperor of Russia had devoted himself so blindly and fatally to the violence and ambition of the power with which his imperial majesty had unfortunately become allied, as to be prepared openly to abet the usurpation of Spain. He therefore met the seeming fairness and moderation of the proposal, with fairness and moderation on his part real and sincere, expressing his just confidence that the Spanish government, acting in the name of Ferdinand VII., was understood to be a party to this negociation. The reply returned by France to this proposition cast off at once the thin disguise, which had been assumed for a momentary purpose, and displayed, with less than ordinary reserve, the arrogance and injustice of that government. The universal Spanish nation was described by the degrading appellation of the Spanish insurgents, and the demand for the admission of its government as a party to any negociation was rejected, as inadmissible and insulting. With astonishment, as well as grief, he had received from the Emperor of Russia a reply similar in effect, although less indecorous in tone and manner. The king would readily have embraced an opportunity of negociation which might have afforded any hope or prospect of a peace compatible with justice and with honour. He lamented an issue by which the sufferings of Europe were prolonged; but neither his honour nor the generosity of the British nation would admit of his consenting to commence a negociation by the abandonment of a brave and loyal people, who were contending for the preservation of all that is dear to man, and whose exertions, in a cause so unquestionably just, he had solemnly pledged himself to sustain."

"Such an answer" (says Dr. Southey, to whose *History of the Peninsular War* we have been indebted for our information on this subject) "was consistent with the honour, the principles, and the feelings of the British people." We perfectly agree with him, and are very glad to do so when we can. We sincerely wish that his political consistency were as undisputed as the splendour of his talents.

The only political affair of consequence in which

Mr. Canning distinguished himself during the spring session of 1809, was on the motion relating to the conduct of his royal highness the Duke of York; whose private and personal irregularities had associated him with an artful and depraved woman, a courtesan of the coarsest order, but who contrived to gain an ascendancy over her royal paramour, which at length brought his official character into suspicion, and exposed him for several weeks to the envemomed shafts of malignant tongues. Of every imputation that implied the slightest stain upon his honour as commander in chief, he was perfectly acquitted by the sober and well-judging portion of the community, even at the time when popular indignation was at its height. A few months brought all men over to the same conviction; and the infamy which Mr. Canning declared must attach somewhere, at last settled on the real delinquents, and their abettors. It was during the debate in question, on the 15th of March, 1809, when having, in answer to Mr. Wilberforce, contended for the innocence of the illustrious accused, in his official character, and maintained that parliament had no jurisdiction over the private offences of the members of the state against morality, that Mr. Canning re-affirmed the declaration we have just quoted, and which gave so much offence when it was uttered.

"My hon. friend tells us that all the world knew of this connexion; that it was matter of notoriety that the Duke of York was living in this state of disgraceful concubinage with Mrs. Clarke. I do assure the house, in the most solemn manner, that I did not know it; and that the first time that, to my recollection, I ever heard the name of Mrs. Clarke, was in this house, from the lips of the hon. gentleman who is the accuser

upon this occasion. I may be giving a great proof of my ignorance of what is going on in the world, by this declaration; but upon my honour it is true; and that of which I was ignorant may have been equally unknown to others.

"This utter ignorance it was, coupled with the utter disbelief which I felt of the Duke of York's submitting to the sort of traffic imputed to him (a feeling which I should entertain in its full force, if I were to hear the same charges to-morrow brought against any honourable gentleman on the opposite benches), that extorted from me, on the night when the hon. gentleman opened his charges, those expressions of indignation which I have so often, in the course of this debate, been called upon to retract or to explain. Sir, I have nothing to retract on that score; nothing to explain: but I have something to deny.

"I *did* say that 'infamy must rest somewhere,' but I did *not* say that it must rest 'either on the accuser or on the accused.' I affirm this with confidence; not only from my recollection of the words, but from my recollection of what was the state of mind in which I spoke, and what the scope and purview of my statement on that occasion. I have, besides, endeavoured to correct and confirm my own recollection by reference to others, by reference to certain records which it would not be regular directly to name, but which I must describe, as well as I can, without naming. Suppose, sir, there were daily to be published accounts of what passes in this house, multiplied perhaps to the number of ten or a dozen, and suppose I were to find my words stated, according to my own recollection of them, in ten or eleven of those accounts, and stated, as the noble lord and those opposite recollect them, by only one of those reporters, and that one notoriously a decided enemy to me and to those with whom I act; should I not be warranted in considering the many which agreed in confirming my own recollection, as better authority than the one which contradicted it? Should I not be warranted in doing so, more especially if I should find, at the same time, another part of the same speech cautiously omitted in that one, and accurately detailed in almost all the others? I refer, sir, to what I said, in the same speech, about the liberty of the press. I said, that the libels on the Duke of York had been so frequent and so flagrant, 'as almost to make good men

hesitate whether the licentiousness of the press was not more mischievous than its liberty was beneficial.' I said this, it is true; but in the same breath I added, 'The hesitation, however, can be but for a moment: the blessings of the liberty of the press are so clear and so acknowledged, as far to outweigh the mischiefs of its abuse. The evil is transitory, but the good is immortal.' Now, sir, if in this part of my speech also I were to find the sentiment omitted which qualifies the expression of doubt, but the doubt itself carefully recorded; if I should find this omission in one record only, and that one the same in which the other part of my speech was misrepresented; and if I were to find both the omission and misrepresentation made in that same record the ground of invective and invidious comment: could I fail to be confirmed in my own recollection of my own words and meaning? or could I doubt for what purpose both had been intentionally disfigured?

"The noble lord (Folkestone) who has so loudly called upon me for retraction and apology, spoke, no doubt, on the supposition of what he conceived to be true: he will now, I hope, believe me, and correct the impression under which he spoke. The 'infamy,' which I anticipated, was to light, where light it will, whatever be the issue of the present question, on that accursed combination whose practices we have seen developed at our bar; a combination, of which the hon. gentleman has been, I hope, the unwilling and innocent instrument, and of which his royal highness the Duke of York has been, unhappily, both the dupe and the victim.

"But it is said that I gave to the hon. gentleman the odious title of 'accuser.' And if I have so styled him, where is the blame? Is the title false in fact, or dishonouring in its application? The fact is clear. The merit depends upon the motive. The noble lord, however, complains of this title, as given to his honourable friend, only perhaps because he thought it given to *him* exclusively. The noble lord is jealous of his share of the merit: he wishes to come into a society and partnership of the glory earned by his honourable friend. The noble lord is welcome to his full share. But yet, whatever be the result of this inquiry, I confess I cannot offer the honourable gentleman my congratulations Of the motives upon which he has acted

I do not presume to judge. They may have been, and I dare say they were, pure and honourable. With the conduct of the honourable gentleman in this house, since the commencement of the inquiry, I am not disposed to quarrel: but still I cannot congratulate him. I cannot concur in the opinion that he has done a great national good. Much rather do I agree with the hon. gentleman (Mr. Bankes), whose proposed amendment is now before us, that whatever the issue may be, much irreparable mischief will have been done; more at least than we can hope to see remedied. Whether, with a view to contingent good, it was right to bring forward these charges, is matter of judgment and conscience which I have no doubt the hon. gentleman weighed well, before he brought them forward. Not only ought he, in my opinion, to have sifted, anxiously and jealously, his own motives, so as to be sure that nothing of personal feeling, of resentment, or of dislike, entered into them; but he ought to have decidedly made up his own conviction that the proportion of evil to be produced by this proceeding was not greater than that of the good which he could hope to do. The legitimate end of punishment is prevention: but here the crime was confessedly at an end, at least in the person whom he proposed to punish. I should not myself think that the abstract benefit to be obtained by punishment, as such, without a view to its consequences, could have such a value in any man's eyes, as to make him feel it his duty to drag every past-gone transgression into open day, for the sole purpose of visiting them with punishment. Redress public evils with a diligent zeal, and with a careful hand. But whether the consequences of such an investigation may not be to produce public evils of a far greater magnitude than those which you punish, is a consideration to which I wish the hon. gentleman had given its due weight before he embarked in this undertaking. Now it is too late. The house has no option.

"I am aware, sir, that these opinions may expose me to much misrepresentation. I shall hear myself reported to have said, perhaps, that the transgressions of princes are to be overlooked, defended, or rewarded. I care not for such misrepresentation. I am conscious of the integrity of the motives which dictate my opinions: and looking to the consequences of this inquiry, which

may be such as to shake this great empire to its foundation; and comparing that possible danger with the degree of good which any the most sanguine moralist can conceive to arise from the abstract consideration of punishment inflicted, and misconduct exposed, to no visible practical purpose; I cannot help declaring, that while I am willing to give the hon. gentleman due credit for the sincerity and goodness of his intentions, I cannot consider him as a great public benefactor. I must add, sir, that if thanks shall be proposed to the hon. gentleman, as I understand is in the contemplation of some persons, I shall stand forward, and I trust I shall stand forward not alone (though alone I would do it), to endeavour to induce this house to reject such a proposition."

Mr. Canning concluded this noble and unanswerable defence of his royal highness in the following strain of enlightened eloquence:

"I would fain persuade you to adhere to sound precedent. But according to some doctrines of this day, you must shut your ears to every thing that I, or any one in my situation, can say to you. For we have heard from an hon. baronet (Sir Francis Burdett), whose usual practice it is to impute to persons in office all sorts of corruption and incapacity; but we have heard it not from him only; he has been followed by one of the greatest landed proprietors amongst us (Mr. Coke), a gentleman who seems to think that he derives from his landed property a degree of authority which property alone, however great, cannot confer,—that what comes from any man in office, on this or any other subject, is not to be attended to; that it is worth nothing. Sir, from whatever quarter such sentiments proceed, I hear them with scorn. They disgrace only those who utter them; and show only what it is that they who are capable of imputing base motives to others would themselves be, if *they* were in official situations.

"But however I may despise such sentiments, I cannot hear them without regret; because I know that property, in times like those in which we live, has need of all the protection which good order and good government can give it; and I think it but ill pleads its own cause, and but ill provides for its own secu-

rity, when its possessors endeavour to instil into the minds of the people a distrust, not of this or that individual, but of the whole class and description of public men. The hon. gentleman who uttered this sentiment may fancy himself safe, in the extent of his possessions, from all the inconveniencies attending popular commotion; but let him not think that the destruction of the authority of government, and the degradation (if *his* opinion or his exertions could effect that degradation) of all those who, by their habits and their education, are qualified for public life, or by an honourable ambition are led to engage in it, however it might conduce to the aggrandisement of his individual importance for a time, would in the end secure the stability of that property on which he founds his pretensions to pre-eminence.

"I have now nearly done. I hope I have done my duty. I have not contended,—I am the last man who will contend, that any preference ought to be shown to the illustrious person upon whom we are sitting in judgment on account of the rank to which he is born. But I think as we deal with him, posterity will deal with us. They will judge as fairly and favourably, as we deal towards him with scrupulous justice. But justice, be it remembered, excludes intimidation and popular clamour on the one hand, as much as it excludes favour and prejudice on the other.

"I will add but one word more. An hon. and learned gentleman (Sir Samuel Romilly) spoke of revolution and civil war as possible events to arise from (I know not precisely what) causes which exist in the present state of this country. I feel the time and the situation in which we are placed to be awful in the extreme. But I do not conceive that the question now before us has, in the most exaggerated view that can be taken of it, any thing to do with apprehensions of revolution. The house of commons has exercised its undoubted authority over a case and a personage of the highest importance and interest to the public. In that I see nothing that leads to revolution. If, indeed, it were attempted to be argued that every man of high station, once accused, must be sacrificed, because a revolution would be the consequence of his acquittal; if such a doctrine can be maintained and adopted here, then indeed we

are farther gone than I had apprehended in the road to that very evil which the hon. and learned gentleman professes to wish to avoid. But I trust the hon. and learned gentleman's fears (for menaces I will not call them) are visionary.

"Whatever our decision shall be, I fear not for the character of the house of commons. The confidence which I feel in this respect does not proceed from indifference. I deem as highly of this branch of the constitution as any man. I think it would be difficult to point out the individual who must, from every motive of education, of personal feeling, and, I hope, not dishonest ambition, be more sincerely interested in the honour of the house of commons; in the maintenance of its honour in the eyes of the country; and of its power, its preponderance in the balance of the state. But I would not flatter the house of commons any more than I would offer adulation to my sovereign. I would not betray either into an abuse of power, by encouraging either to mistake power for right. The house of commons, acting upon this principle, would be a despot; and a despot whose tyranny would not be less intolerable than that of a single tyrant. It is not every thing which the house of commons can do, that it therefore ought to do. It is not because it has the power to sweep from his station whomever it may choose to sacrifice to its displeasure, that it would be justified in condemning the Duke of York either against evidence or without trial; in condemning him upon any other principle than that which would apply equally to the meanest individual; or by any other process than that of impartial and dispassionate justice."

Without meaning to palliate in the slightest degree the moral aberrations of him who, whatever were his faults, or whatever were his virtues (and they were many), has passed to his great account, we would record one fact to his honour—"that he never forgot a kindness, and never resented an injury."

Lord Folkestone's motion for the appointment of a committee to inquire into abuses, brought forward on the 17th of April, Mr. Canning opposed, on the ground

of its generality. "It could not, he said, become a person filling the situation he did, on such a question, to content himself with a silent vote. It would be impossible for him, consistently with his duty, and valuing the frame of the constitution as it stood, not to give his most marked and decided disapprobation of the motion. In opposing it, he did not oppose a motion for a specific inquiry into specific abuses; but he opposed a motion that had no relation whatever to it. A specific inquiry would have fastened on individuals, or abuses; but the object of a motion so general and undefined as that before the house could have no other purpose than to scatter general censure, to keep up a ferment in the public mind, and to do mischief beyond the apprehensions of those whose apprehensions were strongest."

Whether this distaste of the right hon. secretary for vague generalities, and his seeming willingness to entertain something specific in the form of accusation, induced Lord A. Hamilton to bring forward his motion, imputing charges of a very grave nature against Lord Castlereagh, we cannot possibly say; certain it is, however, that it followed soon after that of Lord Folkestone, and afforded the right hon. secretary a fair opportunity of proving his zeal for the purity of election and the honour of his majesty's government. After what he had said respecting specific abuses in the former debate, it will hardly be credited that he assisted the state delinquent to escape, by pleading a mere technicality in his favour. The dirty job was not completed in fact, though as a negociation it was perfect; and therefore the offender is to go unpunished! He admitted the sufficiency of evidence to

establish corrupt intention; but as no man could say the noble lord had conducted himself with contumacious contempt; as he had confessed his error with as much humility as he could, consistently with his own honour and the dignity of the house; he trusted that, having weighed all the circumstances, the house would not think it necessary to come to any criminatory resolutions. The crime so leniently visited by the right hon. gentleman was trafficking for a seat in the house of commons, by an abuse of his influence and authority as president of the board of control.

On the conduct of affairs in Spain, on a motion of Lord Temple, Mr. Canning delivered a speech of a very high order. We would gladly insert it, if the topics were of such a nature as to render it generally interesting. He candidly acknowledges the difficulties under which ministers laboured, from their total ignorance of the Spanish territories. He admitted that "of the situation of Spain we had every thing to learn:" an admission surely which disclosed how little the minister of the war department was qualified for his station.

Against the minister and his colleagues another charge was now forthcoming; imputing to them particularly, and to the treasury generally, the most corrupt conduct in the purchase of boroughs, for the purpose of returning members in the interest of ministers, and bound to support all their measures. The specific instance was adduced by Mr. Madocks, in the following words:

"I affirm, then, that Mr. Dick purchased a seat in this house for the borough of Cashel, through the agency of the Honour-

able Henry Wellesley, who acted for and on behalf of the treasury; that upon a recent question of the last importance, when Mr. Dick had determined to vote according to his conscience, the noble lord (Castlereagh) did intimate to that gentleman the necessity of either his voting with the government, or resigning his seat in that house; and that Mr. Dick, sooner than vote against principle, did make choice of the latter alternative, and did vacate his seat accordingly. To this transaction I charge the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Perceval) as being privy and having connived at it; this I will engage to prove by witnesses at your bar, if the house will give me leave to call them. If the house will permit me to do so, I am satisfied that they could not take a more direct method to remedy the abuses in the representative system of such places as Hastings, Rye, Cambridge, Queenborough, and many other places that could be mentioned, where large annual sums were paid out of the taxes, in the maintenance of sinecure offices and places, to uphold the influence of the treasury in such boroughs.—I shall now, sir, detain you no longer than by again asserting the purity of my motives. They originate in my aversion to such practices, which, to use the concluding language of the ever-memorable Hampshire petition, with all due deference to the superior wisdom of the house, I venture to describe as 'calculated to bring into discredit the government of the country, and to shake the confidence of the people in the honour and independence of the house of commons.'—I have, therefore, like the petitioners, felt it my bounden duty, not only to my constituents, and to my fellow-subjects, but especially to the house, to bring under their notice these outrages, as I deem them, against the liberties of the country; and I have been encouraged the more to do so by the resolution which stands recorded in the journals, which has been this day read at your table, and also by the language contained in the first paragraph of the resolution which was recorded on your journals but sixteen days ago."

Mr. Canning expressly declared, that he opposed the motion of the honourable gentleman because it was acknowledged to be a first step towards parliamentary reform. Against such a measure, he said, the house

had now to make a stand, a determined stand, against the encroachments of the factious. The right honourable gentleman went on to say:

"The object of the present motion was merely to immolate two public characters upon his side of the house; but if it were now to be acceded to, would it stop there? Would not the spirit it was intended to excite call to-morrow for more stately and more numerous victims on the other side? Where would its practical consequences stop? It must bear down all public men in all public situations, and leave their room to be filled by providential men without practice, without experience. The house would surely pause before they adopted a proposition that must lead to such a series of consequences. He must again be permitted to remind the house, that the main and sole object of the present motion was a reform in parliament; that the honourable mover, and more particularly the noble lord (Folkestone) who supported the motion, expressly stated that they were actuated by no hostile feelings against his colleagues; that they had no wish or intention whatsoever to see them removed from office; that their great object was a reform of that house; in short, that all their claims were directed to parliamentary reform. They had already advanced two steps; they had but one more to take, and that was to relieve his majesty's ministers from all attendance in parliament. They would first rob public men of all the influence of character, well knowing that without such a shield they must prove defenceless and impotent. In short, they would take every thing that was liberal from the ambition for place, and reduce public men to that degraded standard to which such a motion as the present must level them. With all his anxiety for parliamentary reform, the avowed object of his motion, as originally announced, the honourable gentleman thought proper to shift his ground, and with more depth of design, and dexterity of execution, he now came forward with a separate measure, with a measure that was only a preliminary to the attainment of his great end. Neither would he state the sort of reform he wished for, but merely dwelt upon the necessity of a general reform, as arising from recent opinions which had sprung from disclosures made by a recent investigation.

But here he had to observe, that although public opinion, when legitimately pronounced, was always to be respected, yet the influence that was supposed to have guided that house on that decision, might in a great measure have been misunderstood. For other causes than what were imputed to corruption—for other predilections than those which were supposed to be then acted upon, tended to that decision. It spoke of the power of that house in terms not to be misconceived. It proved that there was nothing so high that might not be brought under the jurisdiction of that house. It proved that even the intimation of its disapprobation had produced as great an effect as could have been brought about by its most direct and severe animadversion. Good God! was this, then, the period to suppose that the character of the house of commons was lost; and that every, the most hazardous, experiment should be made to retrieve it? Still it was the character and the influence of that house that achieved all our blessings, and distinguished the character and the condition of this country from that of any other country in the world; and was the source from which such blessings flowed to be described only as corrupt, to be stigmatized only as a sink of corruption, an object of alarm and disgust? Of whatever atoms such a body was composed, whether it was the result of some grand design, or merely the offspring of their fortuitous concurrence, it mattered not. Out of it grew the marked character, the vital principle which distinguished this country from all others, and which operated as the perennial source of blessings unknown to any other nation. Was this a thing to be wantonly or wickedly trifled with? The right honourable gentleman concluded, by suggesting a mode of combining in one both the original motion and the amendments that were proposed to it."

Mr. Hutchinson protested against the doctrine of this speech, which posterity, he said, would reprobate. "When it should hear that a house of commons was found so debased as to acknowledge the existence of corruption in its formation, and justify the existence of it—[Cries of Withdraw! withdraw! and violent

uproar]. It was at least consistent for those (said the hon. member) to drown, if possible, the discussion of men who opposed them; convinced, as they must be, that such conduct as they pursued that night could neither bear inquiry, argument, nor the touchstone of common integrity."

Mr. Madocks made a brief reply.

"He defended the consistency of his public life and the purity of his motives. He felt impelled to the course by the sense of public duty, from which not even the conduct of that night should succeed in warping him. A right honourable gentleman (Mr. Windham) had confessed, that corruption existed from the top to the bottom of the state. He was sorry to agree with the right honourable gentleman on this point. It did, indeed, exist most generally. Its universality and ubiquity were frightful, and reminded him of Virgil's figure of Fame:

'Ingrediturque solo, et caput inter nubila condit.'"

"The question being loudly called for, strangers were ordered to withdraw. The two amendments were negatived without a division. The house then divided on the original motion, as proposed by Mr. Madocks: when the numbers were:—

Noes 310
Ayes 85
Majority against Inquiry — 225."

On Mr. Whitbread's motion respecting placemen and pensioners in parliament, Mr. Canning contended that placemen and pensioners ought not to be driven from parliament.

"If no placemen (said the right hon. gentleman) were suffered to sit in parliament but the ministers themselves, it would follow that when the present generation of ministers were over, they must be succeeded by raw and inexperienced persons. This was a necessary consequence; for if those who were acquiring knowledge of the business of government in inferior departments were to be absolutely excluded from sitting in parliament, in what office were they to learn that necessary and constitutional part

of a minister's duty, to explain to that house the motives of their conduct, and to defend the propriety and policy of their measures? If men were to be trained up for ministers in any other school besides that of parliament, if the crown were to look for its ministers any where but in parliament, then, indeed there might be a well-founded jealousy of the power of the crown. He knew no greater security to the people for the faithful discharge of the duties of government, than that those who held high situations should have seats in that house, and be there obliged to explain the motives of their measures and conduct to the house and to the country. If we were now to set about contriving a plan to enable the crown to choose its ministers any where out of parliament, such a plan would be most injurious to the liberty of the country. This was now by long habit, though not by established law, the practice of the constitution, and he was convinced that it could not be changed without great public detriment. This motion would go to remove from their seats in that house many distinguished persons who held sinecure places or pensions for life, as the reward of public services performed either by themselves or their fathers. This exclusion of persons who were receiving rewards for their past services, he conceived, would be equally erroneous and unjust as that of the public officers themselves. He believed it would be admitted that, both in the other house of parliament and in this, there were at least as many persons holding pensions and sinecures who voted against ministers as for them. They, on all occasions, voted as if they had no advantages from the crown. The right honourable gentleman (Mr. Ponsonby) had marked so strongly his own pension as coming from parliament instead of his majesty, that he could not forbear from saying, that if any desire of making that house the source from whence such rewards should flow lurked behind, he should esteem it a most lavish and preposterous idea of remuneration, and he thus early intimated his dissent from any such proposition. The right honourable and learned gentleman (Mr. Ponsonby) had himself a pension for life, and yet the present ministers had always the advantage of his vigilance and correction. There were other honourable gentlemen on the same side of the house, who, though long holding sinecures or pensions, were constantly

arrayed against his majesty's present government. A noble lord (Folkestone) had talked of pensioners being bound by gratitude. The gratitude, however, of those gentlemen for the remuneration they received for their services, did not certainly appear to be any gratitude to the crown. The right honourable and learned gentleman (Mr. Ponsonby) had spoken of his pension being conferred by an act of parliament, and not by the crown. The right honourable gentleman might, therefore, well conceive that it was to the parliament, and not to the crown, that his gratitude was due. If there lurked in the mind of any gentleman the idea of parliamentary pensions being granted as the reward of public services, he, for his part, would much rather forego all claim to remuneration. He did not know any course that would lead to a more lavish and preposterous expenditure. He felt satisfied that the influence of the crown over that house was gradually, but constantly diminishing."

We have now arrived at the period when it is our painful task to record a transaction which reflects no honour on the parties concerned, except that they proceeded to their meditated work of mutual destruction with a cool and determined courage: the one thirsting for revenge, the other most willing to render satisfaction. Good God! the satisfaction of inflicting or receiving the direst injury that one human being can experience from the hands of another! We refer to the duel which took place between Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning.

Duelling is a barbarous relic of other times, and ought long ago to have vanished with wager of battle, to which it is nearly allied, and the other ferocities of a half civilized state. It is little to the credit of our boasted improvement in manners, that the pettiest quarrels are now terminated by a deliberate act of murder, which involves, in many instances, the double guilt of revenge and suicide; or it is avoided by a

shuffling meanness, which creeps through an affront, destitute altogether of that noble magnanimity which either forgives or disdains retaliation, from a sense of conscious rectitude, and the fear of offending Almighty God. We feel, indeed, that on this, and many other points, professed Christians are practical atheists; and that to urge upon them the dictates of Christianity, and the obligation of the divine law, would be only to expose both ourselves and their religion to the utmost derision and contempt. If every instance where the lives of the murderers who meet to consummate a duel are put in jeopardy involves a high degree of moral guilt, this guilt must be deeply aggravated where the parties occupy stations of great responsibility. Parents and husbands live not for themselves only, but for those who depend upon them, and to whose comfort and happiness their continuance in this world seems to be indispensable. When, in addition to these natural relations, there are annexed those which involve the prosperity of nations—when the individuals sustain the weight of empire, and have duties to perform which embrace the entire circle of society, such men are bound by the most sacred considerations to live for that community which has intrusted its interests to their hands. To stake a nation's weal against a personal affront, and to sacrifice one's country because we have quarrelled with a friend, or provoked an enemy, is a baseness for which nothing can atone.

As to the affair of honour, which had nearly deprived the country in one moment of two members of parliament, and the cabinet of its most important ministers, it seems to us, in the one case, to have been precipitated by blinded rage, and to have been yielded

to in the other merely because it was demanded;—perhaps the severe law of custom left no alternative. In high life, as it is called, if a man is challenged, he must fight. The question, then, to be answered is, whether Lord Castlereagh was justified, according to the usage of society in this particular, in calling out his right honourable antagonist. For our own parts, we are so dull and unapprehensive, that we cannot perceive that the noble lord's honour was at all wounded in the matter of his complaint. That his feelings were irritated, and that, mortified to the quick, he wanted some victim on *which* to wreak that indignation which he was not *then* prepared to vent upon himself, we can easily imagine. But it does not appear to us that his charge of duplicity against his colleague is at all made out. The head and front of Mr. Canning's offending was simply, that instead of communicating immediately to the noble lord what, from a younger man than his lordship, might have been deemed by him an arrogant assumption of superiority, Mr. Canning conferred with the head of the administration on the subject: he tendered his own resignation, which that noble person refused to accept: and he consented to remain in office, only on condition that the Duke of Portland, and the elder members of the cabinet, would take upon themselves the delicate task of inducing Lord Castlereagh to exchange the war department for another more suited to his talents, and for which he was better qualified. This the parties to whom the affair was intrusted neglected to do, and by a breach of confidence, on whom chargeable it is not known, Lord Castlereagh was informed that Mr. Canning had demanded his dismission. On

this slight and insufficient ground the noble lord immediately wrote to Mr. Canning, in the moment of feverish irritation, and while the failure of the expedition to the Scheldt, like a fiery viper, was gnawing upon his heart. But for the agitation of his mind, his lordship must have perceived, that Mr. Canning had only exercised his right of acting with whom he pleased, and that, in tendering his resignation, in order that he might leave the noble lord in full possession of his power, the responsibility of which he was no longer willing to share with him, he had thrown the onus of his dismission upon his superiors in the cabinet, who, as they had determined to retain Mr. Canning, and to dismiss the minister at war, ought to have charged themselves with the whole transaction, without betraying the confidence, which would not have been reposed in them, had they simply permitted him to retire. We shall insert here the letter of Lord Castlereagh, with Mr. Canning's prompt and brief reply. The documentary papers and the entire correspondence will be found in the Appendix.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Lord Castlereagh's Letter to Mr. Canning.

"St. James's Square, Sept. 19.

"Sir,—It is unnecessary for me to enter into any detailed statement of the circumstances which preceded the recent resignations. It is enough for me, with a view to the immediate object of this letter, to state, that it appears a proposition had been agitated, without any communication with me, for my removal from the war department; and that you, towards the close of last session, having urged a decision upon this question, with the alternative of your seceding from the government, procured a positive promise from the Duke of Portland (the execution of which you afterwards considered yourself entitled to

enforce), that such removal should be carried into effect. Notwithstanding this promise, by which I consider you pronounced it unfit that I should remain charged with the conduct of the war, and by which my situation as a minister of the crown was made dependent upon your will and pleasure, you continued to sit in the same cabinet with me, and to leave me not only in the persuasion that I possessed your confidence and support as a colleague, but you allowed me, in breach of every principle of good faith, both public and private, though thus virtually superseded, to originate and proceed in the execution of a new enterprise of the most arduous and important nature, with your apparent concurrence, and ostensible approbation.

"You were fully aware that, if my situation in the government had been disclosed to me, I could not have submitted to remain one moment in office, without the entire abandonment of my private honour and public duty. You knew I was deceived, and you continued to deceive me.

"I am aware it may be said, which I am ready to acknowledge, that when you pressed for a decision for my removal, you also pressed for its disclosure, and that it was resisted by the Duke of Portland, and some members of the government, supposed to be my friends. But I never can admit, that you have a right to make use of such a plea in justification of an act affecting my honour; nor that the sentiments of others could justify an acquiescence in such a delusion on our part, who had yourself felt and stated its unfairness. Nor can I admit that the head of any administration, or any supposed friends, (whatever may be their motives), can authorize or sanction any man in such a course of long and persevering deception. For, were I to admit such a principle, my honour and character would be, from that moment, in the discretion of persons wholly unauthorized, and known to you to be unauthorized, to act for me in such a case. It was, therefore, your act and your conduct which deceived me; and it is impossible for me to acquiesce in being placed in a situation by you, which no man of honour could knowingly submit to, nor patiently suffer himself to be betrayed into, without forfeiting that character.

"I have no right, as a public man, to resent your demanding,

upon public grounds, my removal from the particular office I have held, or even from the administration, as a condition of your continuing a member of the government. But I have a distinct right to expect that a proposition, justifiable in itself, shall not be executed in an unjustifiable manner, and at the expense of my honour and reputation. And I consider that you were bound, at least, to avail yourself of the same alternative, namely, your own resignation, to take you out of the predicament of practising such a deceit towards me, which you did exercise in demanding a decision for my removal.

"Under these circumstances, I must require that satisfaction from you to which I feel myself entitled to lay claim.

"I am, &c.

"CASTLEREAGH.

"The Right Hon. George Canning."

Mr. Canning's Reply.

"Gloucester Lodge, Sept. 20.

"MY LORD,—The tone and purport of your lordship's letter, which I have this moment received, of course preclude any other answer, on my part, to the misapprehensions and misrepresentations with which it abounds, than that I will cheerfully give your lordship the satisfaction which you require.

"I am, &c.

"GEORGE CANNING.

"Lord Viscount Castlereagh," &c.

On Thursday, 21st September, 1809, these right honourable gentlemen met on Putney Heath, attended by their respective seconds; Lord Castlereagh by the Earl of Yarmouth, and Mr. Canning by Mr. Ellis. The meeting took place at six in the morning, near the telegraph. After taking their ground, they fired by signal, and missed; and no explanation taking place, they fired at each other a second time, when the ball from Lord Castlereagh's pistol went through Mr. Canning's thigh, on the outer side of the bone.

This, however, would not have terminated the affair, had not the seconds interfered when they perceived the blood streaming from Mr. Canning's wound, who was in the attitude to receive and return another fire. There is something extremely deadly in this, and gives the whole transaction a character of malicious hate, at least on the part of the challenger, from which a well regulated mind instinctively revolts. Indeed, we are told, that the feeling which produced the duel did not end with it. "Castlereagh," said Sheridan, "is an Irishman even in his quarrels, for he was not a whit more satisfied after receiving satisfaction than before." How could such a man be a generous adversary? He that never gave human nature credit for a virtue, how could he be expected to display even its semblance, when hurried to the forgetfulness of himself by the energy of feeling? It is in the hour of excitement that we discover the real characters of men. And he that could view his antagonist bleeding before him, and still meditate another assault on his life, may wear a human form, but he wants a human heart. Had the conflict been fatal to both, of one we should have said, that he died too soon; of the other, it would have been better for his country had he never lived. Mr. Canning felt no resentment, and when unjustly assailed by the man who carried his enmity from the field to the senate, he silently left his vindication to time. Both the ministers resigned; the Duke of Portland did the same, compelled by the state of his health, for he died almost immediately afterwards; and thus the administration was broken up. Lord Liverpool, the only remaining secretary of state, performed the business of the other

two departments, while the other members of the cabinet looked about in dismay, and almost in despair, for new colleagues and for a new head. Their situation appeared so forlorn, that official letters were addressed to Earl Grey and Lord Grenville, informing them that his majesty had authorized the Earl of Liverpool and Mr. Perceval to communicate with their lordships, for the purpose of forming an extended and combined administration. The noble persons thus applied to declined the proffered honour. Earl Grey replied, "that, under the circumstances, his acceptance of office was impossible; he could not communicate with the existing ministers on such a subject." And Lord Grenville said, "My objections are not personal; they apply to the principles of the government itself, and to the circumstances which attended its appointment." In this dilemma, application was made to Marquis Wellesley, who accepted the office which Mr. Canning vacated; the Earl of Liverpool was transferred from the home to the war department, and the situation which he had vacated was filled by Mr. Ryder. Lord Palmerston was made secretary at war in the room of Sir James Pulteney, and Mr. Perceval took the place of the Duke of Portland; thus uniting in himself, as Mr. Pitt and Mr. Addington had done before him, the offices of first lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer. The loss of the duke was only that of a name; that of Mr. Canning was greatly regretted, as was also the secession of Mr. Huskisson, who resigned his seat at the treasury at the same time. Lord Castlereagh retired, loaded with the execrations of the country; for the failure of the expedition to the Scheldt was attributed not, in any

degree, to the army or navy, whose alacrity in the cause could not have been exceeded, but to the shameful ignorance and rashness of those who planned it.

CHAPTER VII.

The Walcheren Expedition—Mr. Whitbread's Attack on Mr. Canning—The Regency—Grant to Lord Wellington—Lord Morpeth's Motion on the Catholic Question—Mr. Canning's Speech—The State of the Nation—That Part of Mr. Canning's Speech which refers to Ireland—Mr. Perceval's Assassination—Mr. Canning declines Office—His Motion and incomparable Speech on Catholic Claims—No Popery.

ALTHOUGH Mr. Canning had no longer a seat in the cabinet, and was removed from office, yet something of the responsibility of both situations still attached to him. It is true he had no direct share in the advice which sent forth the expedition to Walcheren, which covered our councils and our government with indelible disgrace; made them the laughing-stock of Europe; and, what was more galling than all the rest, the derision of Buonaparte: yet was he, as a minister of the crown, a joint participator in the infamy. He defended the measure as well as he could, and he likewise attempted to defend himself. It is not too much to say that he failed in both. Mr. Whitbread said boldly:

"I look upon him (Mr. Canning) as a man more responsible than the noble lord (Castlereagh) for the failure of the expedi-

tion. I consider him as deeply responsible, for having done that which, in the history of the country, no other man could have been found to have done. That right honourable gentleman, knowing what the interests of the country required,—knowing, too, all those measures which were in contemplation and going on, and having information of the expedition which was in preparation,—did, on the 16th of April last, go and declare to the Duke of Portland, then at the head of the government, that the minister who was to have the conduct of the expedition was not competent to his situation; that the man on whom that duty devolved, however he might esteem him in private,—however he might value him for his good qualities and virtues,—was not competent to his public situation. Not satisfied with this, the right honourable gentleman went to his majesty, to make the same communication, for fear of any mistake. But to the noble lord himself he never communicated his opinion that he thought him incapable of performing the duties of his situation, but suffered him to originate, and conduct to a close, the expedition which has terminated so disgracefully to the country.

"The expedition thus undertaken has failed; and I therefore have to call upon the house of commons to avenge the public upon those ministers who have subjected the nation to this calamity; but, above all, upon that individual who has declared to the Duke of Portland, and afterwards, for fear of mistake, went and declared to the king, that the minister intrusted with its conduct was incompetent to his situation.

"There is, indeed, from the centre to the circumference of the empire, one united, universal, heart-rending cry for justice. Give it, then, to the supplication of the people;—give it to the sorrows of the army;—give it, as the last consolation, to the widows and orphans of the dead;—give it as a pledge of the honour and integrity of the living!"

To this virulent attack Mr. Canning never deigned to reply.

At the commencement of the last session, in 1810, Mr. Canning supported the grant of an annuity to

Lord Wellington; and thus contributed, by his eloquence and influence, to raise this noble personage to that very elevation from which he afterwards proudly looked down upon the plebeian minister. In the stormy arena of debate Mr. Canning seldom appeared during the years 1810 and 1811. His most elaborate speeches, comprehended in this period, related to the expedition already referred to; to the affairs of Spain and Portugal; to the question of the regency; to the army estimates; and to the report of the bullion committee. In all these he fights side by side with the ministers, with very little opposition; with just enough, indeed, to let them feel he was not in their corps.

The lamented illness of the king, which placed the Prince of Wales in the high station of regent of the empire, unsealed the lips of Mr. Canning upon the subject of catholic emancipation. He now felt that the great obstacle to the discussion of this question, and the pressing it upon parliament and the country, was removed; and he availed himself of the first opportunity which occurred to avow his opinions, and to enforce the principles of his policy. His first open speech on this subject was on the motion of Lord Morpeth, made on the 3d of February, 1812. Mr. Canning expressed himself in the following words:

"Having heard my right honourable and learned friend point out, not only what are the reasons for disallowing the catholic claims now, but also express the opinions of those who are determined to shut the door for ever against the admission of those claims, it becomes me, in the discharge of my duty, clearly to explain my sentiments on this subject. I deeply regret that the discussion has, at this time, been brought forward; as the speech of my right honourable and learned friend is calculated to cherish and keep alive those animosities which should rather

be buried in eternal oblivion. But since it has been brought under the consideration of the house, I rejoice that the task of doing it has fallen to the lot of the noble viscount; for he has discharged the duty with that wisdom and talent which entitles him to the applauses of every one, but which those who know him had the confidence to anticipate. It is a source of satisfaction to me to be able to agree with my noble friend in many of his propositions; but the satisfaction is not unalloyed, in the mortification I feel to be compelled to differ with him in some of his arguments; but I trust I shall be able to discuss the subject with that temper of which I have so eminent an example in my noble friend.

"My honourable and learned friend has talked of the expectations arising out of the promises held forth at the time of the union. As to promises, there have been none; but as to expectation, there certainly has been a great deal. Expectations have been held out, the disappointment of which involves the moral guilt of an absolute breach of faith. It has been argued, unquestionably argued, that whatever decision, with respect to the catholic claims, the honourable house might ultimately arrive at, the measure of the union is the only one which can insure to these claims a fair, calm, and temperate discussion; that the question would, under a consideration of this measure, be transferred to a tribunal where, at least, it would be sure of a calm and deliberate, a fair and impartial hearing; where it would be dispassionately examined in all its bearings; and where every concession, which did not absolutely involve the safety of our political and religious institutions, would be made in the mild and mercy-breathing spirit of charity—the boast of Christianity—the practice of Britons.

"But if ever there was a measure tending 'to keep the word of promise to the ear, and break it to the hope,' it is couched in the propositions of my hon. and learned friend (Sir John Nichols), which shut the door for ever against the admission of the catholic claims. I agree with my noble friend (Lord Morpeth) on the importance of the subject to which our attention is drawn; but the noble viscount has said, that the question could only be viewed in one simple light, and, if I could have coincided with him, I must, of necessity have given him my vote. If my noble

friend could succeed in convincing me that the only course the honourable house has to pursue is, to consider the propriety and expediency of retracing its steps altogether, and reducing the great body of the catholics to utter despair, by annulling all the concessions already made, and abrogating all laws which have hitherto been passed in their favour;—or, to proceed to the final adjustment of the catholic claims—in consummating their dearest wishes—in admitting the persecuted members of the church of Rome to the immunities of freedom, and exalting them into a sense of their constitutional importance as free members of a free state.

"If, sir, I say, the only question before the house were, whether it were best to proceed or turn back,—there is, there can be, no doubt to which alternative I should give the preference,—a sense of justice would dictate my course;—I should vote on the side of the weak against the strong; and relieve, as far as I individually might, the oppressed catholic from the tyranny which fear, in the first instance, imposed, and an ignorant and pertinacious clinging to custom has continued, and would now perpetuate.

"My very hon. and learned friend has told us, indeed, that we ought to stop where we are: but, sir, in deciding upon that proposition, a due attention must be paid to time and circumstances. What is the present condition of Ireland? There is a great, an active, an intelligent population excluded from the pale of the constitution, but to which great political privileges have been conceded;—which has been gradually advanced to the limits of the constitution, and then told it must not hope to get into the enclosure—to be admitted into the political fold. This has been the course pursued during the reign of his present majesty; and yet, according to my hon. and learned friend, the more you restrict, the more you quiet them;—yes, according to the proverb, 'Dead men tell no tales.' The maxim and the adage may be alike carried too far. After having gone thus far,—after having thought it right to remove many of the restrictions to which the catholics have been subjected, I, for one, am not willing to declare, now, that in no time, and under no circumstances, I will proceed no further in the work of amelioration. After having, in reality, removed the disqualifications of

the catholics, I cannot admit the propriety of retaining the brand by which distrust has been marked.

" Considering the question retrospectively, I am sensible that there were formerly many grounds for these restrictions which do not now exist, and that the onus of proving the necessity for their continuation rests with those who defend, not a system, but the fragments of one,—who maintain that the safety of the state depends upon adhering to the remains of a plan which can serve no other purpose than to mark to future ages what the system had once been.

" The view I take of the question is merely political. My learned friend has said, that he would not enter particularly into the consideration of the doctrine of transubstantiation, and other peculiar features of the catholic religion. Why did he not? Because he took all these things in their worst sense. When a belief in transubstantiation was made the ground of exclusion, it was not the doctrine that was intended to be condemned. The belief was, at the time of imposing the disqualifications, the sign of political principles adverse to the constitution and liberties of the country. It never, surely, had been the intentions of those who originated the catholic disqualifications, to decide upon abstract points of theology;—the religious creed was then regarded as the sign of political opinions, and hence the restrictions of the catholics. That these had not been imposed on light grounds, the history of the world sufficiently proves.

" I do not mean to go back to centuries of persecution, and justify the restrictions on the ground that Ireland was a conquered country. I might, with an equal portion of reason, contend for the continuation of any system here, merely because it had been established in the time of William the Conqueror. But I am compelled to go back to the period of the reformation. Excellent as the effects of this event undoubtedly were in many points of view, the political consequence certainly was the splitting into different religious parties the children of the same soil. The agreement in religious opinions was then often a stronger bond of connexion than that of a common country. Under these circumstances, it might have been proper that the dominant sect should place the rest under certain restrictions. Such re-

strictions were therefore imposed, and continued for a longer or a shorter time, according to circumstances. The facts were, however, far from justifying the generality of my learned friend's observations. He should have told us, that the thirteen Swiss cantons were composed—part of catholics and part of protestants, and three of them of both, and yet they had gone on for two centuries in political harmony together; and then proceeded to show that the same rule was not applicable to large states as to small. I will not enter at present into this consideration; but this fact would have proved, that it had not been impossible, even in past times, for men of different opinions in matters of religion, to coalesce politically as a nation. But is there no other nation where this union prevailed? Has there been, in no other quarter, an equality with regard to political privileges, joined with a difference of religious sentiment? What if this union had existed in France? By the edict of Nantz, protestants were placed, as to all political advantages, on an equal footing with the catholics. In this situation matters continued during the lapse of upwards of eighty years. It was provided by that edict, that all the people, catholics and protestants, should be admitted to dignities and offices of all kinds, without any difference on account of religious opinions; and that no oath should be required, except that of fidelity to the king. Henry the Fourth, for it was no worse than he that spoke, declared, that every office of the state shall be open to all his subjects indifferently, without regard to religious differences.

"I trust it will not be imagined, sir, that I am anxious to recommend the example of France and its new philosophy. What I said was, that a monarch, whom all the world join in admiring, had thought that the best means of putting an end to internal divisions was by placing his subjects all on an equal footing as to political privileges. And these were not the worst times of France, when Sully was its minister, and Turenne and Saxe at the head of its armies. A monarch, whose court was at once the model and the terror of his neighbours, in a moment of weakness, at the instigation of a jesuitical priest, revoked the edict of Nantz. Let any one look at the history of France since that period, and say whether he would prefer the time when the edict subsisted, or the time subsequent to its revoca-

tion. Who would not put his finger on the former epoch, and make choice of that without hesitation? But, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the continent was convulsed with religious persecutions. When this country adopted the reformed religion, every foreign attack upon it was sure to be visited with some severe restriction on Ireland. The shores of England were covered with protestants, seeking protection and liberty. This was the consequence of continental convulsion. But look at the flying clergy in 1695, and at those who fled from the late atheistical persecutions. Were these events calculated to operate in a similar way, or did they require a similar remedy? When all religion is threatened, the lesser danger must be overlooked, to meet the greater.

"It has lately become a fashion to say, that the concessions to the catholics have only taken place at times when they were extorted by the distress of the country: but assertions of this kind are not well founded. The concessions in 1782 had been made to the protestants of Ireland as well as to the catholics; and it is unfair to say that they have been extorted. They had in truth been sometimes an unforeseen and unexpected boon. The period is now come, however, when the propriety of continuing any of these restrictions may be calmly and temperately discussed. This is the effect of the union; and yet those who were loudest in supporting the catholic claims have proposed the repeal of the union; and a motion to that effect is actually depending in this house. What! repeal the union? establish the heptarchy? If a person were to sit down and contrive what would be most likely to prevent the granting of the catholic claims, he could not find out a more effectual method than that of proposing to repeal the union. With such a question pending in the house, I think it impossible for us to entertain the consideration of the present subject in the way which its magnitude deserves.

"Suppose the hon. gentleman succeeds in repealing the union, what will be the situation of the present question? It would be unsafe then to concede the catholic claims, and it would be little short of high treason for the house to determine on a subject which belonged to Ireland separately. But looking at the question independently of this consideration, I ask why you

have given the catholics the right to vote for members, if you mean to exclude them from seats in parliament? Why admit them to the bar, if you mean to shut up the avenues to the bench? Why admit them to so much, if you condemn them to an eternal exclusion from all the rest? Oh! profound ignorance of human nature! To concede so far, and then imagine that an active and intelligent people are to be satisfied with an everlasting exclusion, when they have reached almost the very pinnacle of their ambition! The catholics having been admitted to the inferior office, must at last be admitted to the superior. I entreat the house to consider what would be the consequence of a bar almost entirely catholic, with a bench from which they were eternally excluded. I have the highest opinion of the profession of the bar, which has produced so many persons who have shone in the service of the state, and have illustrated the importance of their profession by the brilliant examples they have afforded; but, if the bar be illiberalized, and, as is the case with great part of the profession in Ireland, confined merely to the acquisition of money for professional assiduity, will not the character of the bar be materially altered? If the bar of Ireland is to remain the limit and barrier which is to be put to the hopes and ambition of its votaries, is it not a matter for serious consideration?

"Such is the undeniable situation of the country, that it must look to war, not as an occasional calamity, but as a permanent evil. We must look at it as the element which, for years, we must expect to breathe. It has been justly stated, that the numbers of the catholics in the army were great; and there can be no doubt that they may be still greater; as long as hope remains, there will be the spirit of emulation and ambition. But while it is admitted on all hands that their services are most beneficial and most exemplary, there are difficulties entertained about the existence of a catholic general. There might be protestant generals commanding catholic armies, and even a foreign catholic might command protestant soldiers; but still, no native catholic is to be permitted to hold a command over his fellow-subjects, whatever their religion might be. The learned gentleman seems to think that this state of things should re-

main permanent. He has asked me if I am prepared to give up all. I am not prepared to do so: but I will ask him, in God's name, not to shut the door against the claims of the catholics—not to adopt that strange mode proposed, which was called a tranquillizing vote, on such a subject. People were afraid of seeing a catholic lord chancellor, or a catholic general; and that the pope and Buonaparte being both friends together, would have a wonderful influence upon such persons. But I see reasons to suspect the existence of this apprehended danger. There have been times in Europe, when a geographer could have described, by colouring his map, what were the catholic and what were the protestant states of that quarter of the globe; and the distinctions of his colours would have been emblematical of the different policy, interest, and union, of the various states. But, thanks to Buonaparte, among all his various acts of usurpation and atrocity, he has exalted the notion and feeling of patriotism far above any thing that could be derived from belonging to any particular sect. He has made it the interest of all to look at the state of the civilized world, with only two distinctions, namely, what was, and what was not, French.

"There have been times when leagues had been formed of catholic powers against the advancement of the protestant cause and interest, and which created the necessity for all states which had embraced the tenets of the reformed religion to combine against the attempt of the ancient and corrupted ecclesiastical establishment; but let any man now look at the map of Europe, coloured as it may be, and see how distinctions, founded upon religious differences, actually apply. What would they discover in the conduct of Buonaparte, the sovereign of France, the successor of her ancient kings, the eldest son of the church? Was it, indeed, only with catholic people and catholic states that he formed his alliances? or to them alone that he extended what he called his protection? Let the house look at the present map of Europe—look at Lutheran Saxony, under his authority—at all protestant Germany, partitioned as it has been, at his will—at protestant Denmark and protestant Sweden—at Calvinistic Prussia and anticatholic Russia—yet struggling in his toils. Yet there are to be found not a few persons, in this country, whose lan-

guage seems to say, that it is the power of the pope, and not the terrors of Buonaparte, that we are to apprehend—that our fears are to be excited here, in our own land, by the thunders of the Vatican, and not by those of the artillery of the commander who rules over France—that he, after exhausting all terrestrial means of attacking us, would, if the catholic petition were agreed to, resort speedily to a spiritual assault—and that, when all the ordinary modes of human warfare proved ineffectual, he would call in the aid of bulls and indulgences, and the other machinery of ecclesiastical hostility. How is it that he has made no use of the holy inquisition? We are now encouraging, by every means, the cause, and actually fighting the battles, of those who resisted his oppressions; who were, after all, the most attached and the most bigoted to the Romish faith, of all the nations of Europe—namely, the patriotic inhabitants of the Peninsula. Yet they are precisely the people who most steadily, sincerely, and bravely, oppose themselves to his schemes of daring conquest and unjust dominion. In that part of our political conduct we have done that which was perfectly right, both in its justice and in its policy. Whenever it comes under examination or review, it will, I am confident, in the many bright pages of our history, be found to be amongst the brightest. It has been supposed by many, that in what we have attempted in the Peninsula, and what we still continue to do there, we are endeavouring something beyond our means. Different as my opinion may be, this is not the time for entering upon such a discussion; but this I must say, that when we are pouring out the population of catholic Ireland, to aid the just cause of catholic Spain, we ought to look upon charges, founded on the religion of individuals, with no small degree of suspicion. It seems as if the mighty perils in which we are placed have not the power to rouse us to an adequate sense of our difficulties and our dangers, and that we act like men who, in the midst of a dreadful conflagration, are more eager to run all risks for the preservation of some petty private property, than to prevent the general threatened devastation. It may seem as if, while in the act of witnessing the awful convulsions of nature, which have changed the course of the stream, and dried up the ancient channel, we were standing on the original banks, conceiving the river to be still impassable. But still it is contended,

that concessions to the catholics would not only create great danger, but would have a tendency to overthrow the established church. But, sir, the *onus probandi* in this part of the discussion lies not with me, but with the hon. and learned gentleman. If the catholics of Ireland were so exceedingly ignorant as has been represented, and subject only to the influence of ignorant though bigoted priests, I cannot perceive in what manner they can become so very formidable. What sort of hostilities can be waged against a great civil power, combined with an ecclesiastical power, with all its natural ties and attachments—all its long-existing authorities—all its endowments, and its sympathizing interests—by a number of ignorant catholics, even by the advice and assistance of a number of ignorant priests? Is this a formidable description of imminent danger? The learned gentleman has disclaimed imputing to the catholics a disposition to make war upon every other establishment of religion; but if he disclaim this, he ought at least to prove his other grounds of objection. He declines entering into particular questions. This is by no means satisfactory; for it is, in truth, in those very particulars that the reasons are to be found for those precautionary measures which have been adopted against the Roman catholics. And, in order to make his own opinions clear, it becomes absolutely necessary that the learned gentleman should explain this part of the subject.

"Such is the state of opinions, that those are not wanting who think that the additional gift proposed to the catholics will form a greater æra, and make a greater change in the country, than any it has experienced since the reformation, by any revolution, though involving the dethronement of a king, the change of a protestant church establishment, and the change of the legislature itself. But such objections divide the consideration of the question into two points; the will and the power of the party to whom this concession should be made. Why should it be imputed that they have the will to effect such a change? The desire to prevail is common to all classes, of whatever faith; and it is perfectly true, that the catholic religion is predominant at this day in most kingdoms in the world; but, although that be the fact, I deny that in states not catholic—that under protestant establishments—the catholics have attempted to raise their own hierarchy.

For the truth of this assertion, I confidently appeal to the history of modern Europe. But if the attempt were made, how is it to be met? By reason; and, if that were not sufficient, by force. I beg leave to call the attention of the learned gentleman to the history of the Christian church, even before it became civilly and politically established; a branch of knowledge in which I believe that the learned gentleman must have the advantage of me, and which is useful in looking at this question. If reason has no effect in any imaginary future claim of the catholics, such claim, irregularly enforced, should be met by the same measures used to suppress a rebellion. But we have given them rights, influence, powers,—we have given them great moral force in society; and now, by a strange and repulsive conduct, we turn round to deprive them of the means of using them. Is it not strange to talk of dangers of this description to the church of England,—of which it has been justly said, that she had been nursed in persecution, by which she had learned mercy,—to the church of England, with all the influence, and piety, and honours, and emoluments, and learning, with which she can defend herself? This is not the time or place to enter into a discussion of what are the real dangers of the church; though, whatever they are, they exist in very different causes. The church is sufficiently powerful for her own defence, and would not be left without strenuous exertions in her support, from the love, and esteem, and veneration of all those whom such a church comforted and consoled. Cemented as her connexion is with the state, riveted in the affections of so great a portion of our fellow-subjects, and purified and consecrated by the blood of martyrs, is she to fear the efforts of sectaries? No. I repeat, the *onus probandi* lies with those who depict her dangers.

"I think it a great error to look at this question as if it were to be settled by a negociation between two hostile powers. That is not my notion of legislation, as a friend to wholesome deliberation. Parliament may make the gift: let the parties take it, or leave it; but it cannot be done on the claim of right, which is quite untenable; that question, like the union, cannot be made matter of argument. No dispute can be entertained on the right of parliament to defend the constitution against danger. It is a question of expediency; but I do not view the present motion as

wise or salutary at the present time, and under the present circumstances. The Irish catholics themselves have adjourned their meetings for the purpose of framing and carrying up a petition to the throne, from which they have received all the benefits that have been conferred on them during this reign. The existing irritation in Ireland is no ground for going into a committee, since that is an incidental circumstance relating to the law of the land, and not implicating the general question, which should not be regarded, at any time, as a trial of strength, but looked at on its own merits; nor should it be brought forward annually, as a question of party, which would only protract the final settlement. It should have the chance of being so introduced as to be likely to be successful. When the intention was avowed of petitioning the executive, the warmest friend of the measure should have allowed a reasonable time, and have refrained from bringing the matter into parliament, and intercepting the coming grace of the throne. None who converse at large can be ignorant of the prejudices existing, which time and reasoning can alone overcome. This moment of heat is not the time. If I may presume to advise, I say, do not press your claims at present; they neither have flattering hopes of success, nor the awful certainty of despair. If they were in the latter case, I might excuse them for complaint, instead of solicitation, as it gives me at once a species of consolation, and even of vengeance. That is not the situation of the catholics. I feel I am discharging a faithful duty, from which no popularity can be expected.

"Wishing well to the catholics, not as such, but as part of the empire, I wish the question at rest; not in the way of victory, but of conciliation; not so as to attack the honest prejudices of protestants, but so as to remove them. The time will come, and that, I trust, at no great distance, when mutual moderation and reflection will produce *general concurrence*. But the present motion can be only grateful to those who wish the door of hope to be closed for ever. Seeing, therefore, that it can be productive of no advantage, having reviewed all the circumstances of the case, and fairly expressed my opinion upon the matter, I feel it my duty to give it a negative."

About this period the Marquis Wellesley resigned

the seals of the foreign department, to which the Earl of Liverpool immediately succeeded. It was soon understood that the catholic was abandoned as a government question. It was thus left to struggle alone against all the prejudices of bigotry in the country, and against the secret influence of the cabinet; for it is a just inference, that where the cabinet is not for a measure, it is against it. In the debate on the state of the nation, referring to the peace and tranquillity of the empire, and especially of Ireland, Mr. Canning said:

"On a former night I opposed the motion concerning the catholics of Ireland, because it involved a censure of ministers, whom I did not deem censurable; and because I did not think the mode of bringing forth the motion well chosen. I did not approve of the mode, because I conceived that much benefit would result from the question being brought before parliament, by the executive government. Now, however, the matter is changed; and I deem it a most serious question, when it is considered what we have heard from two ministers this night, that the doors are to be shut for ever against those claims. I can collect no other meaning but that, as long as the government continued on its present basis, there is no chance of that question originating with it. Petitions, indeed, may be received from Ireland; but the hope I entertained, that the catholic question would be brought forward as a measure of government, is now lost for ever. The chancellor of the exchequer has said, that a time may come when their claims may be allowed; but I do not see when it can come. What subtleties! what refinements! It was objected to an orator of old, that he dealt too much in refinement. 'Ay,' said he, 'but I speak to Athenians.' To whom did the right honourable gentleman speak? To what people were those distinctions addressed? To a people who had warm and generous hearts to feel, but not minds qualified to discriminate—to persons unenlightened, rude, and uncultivated—who believe in certain mysteries that stagger

our faith, but which certainly do not exceed the mysteries of these refinements.

"The declaration, however, amounts to this—to a denunciation of perpetual and hopeless exclusion so long as the right honourable gentleman remains in office. The noble lord has said, that his opinion has remained the same as mine when we were in office together. But has nothing happened since? I think I may state it constitutionally, and I stated it as an opinion upon which I acted in taking office, and upon which I acted in office, that the sovereign has an individual opinion on all subjects presented to him by the legislature: and those who question that, must question many acts of King William—many of the acts of that period nearest the renovation of our constitution, when we had a natural jealousy of all that could impair its freshness. It is a question for the administration to decide upon, to which the noble lord has alluded, whether they will press their opinion at all risks, or whether they will leave the conscience of their sovereign unwrung upon that delicate point.

"The obstacle that exists is a great one; but it is no greater than what a loving father interposes to an expecting but not undutiful child. I would have consented to concede the claims then, but that one, whom the constitution has armed with power to annul the consent, has intimated his intention. I feel that circumstances are now changed—I feel that that obstacle is removed—but even if I did not see that change, is it likely that they who are most interested would not found hopes upon it? They have looked forward to a removal of this obstacle, as a period when their griefs would be heard, and perhaps redressed. And what must be the effect of this disappointment upon their minds? What is always the effect of disappointed hope on the human mind? I am speaking to an audience capable of feeling these questions. Is it possible that this debate can go to Ireland, and not excite the strongest sensations? The completion of their long-nourished desires do not now depend upon the life of an aged man, a life they would not shorten one day, by their wishes, to gain their views, but upon the continuation of the present ministry in favour. But what might have been conceded to such a man, to his age, to his sufferings, to the me-

mory of what he has done for his people, will not be conceded to the virtues and services of my right honourable friend. A question of this vital importance is now to be brought before the house in a new way, not as a government one, but as one on which every person will be at liberty to vote according to his real feelings. And there is a possibility, nay, a probability, that ministers will be found voting against each other. Reference has been made to the slave trade, in justification of this plan; but I think it the most fortunate part of that transaction, that it was at last taken up as a government question, when the trade received its final blow. If that, however, is cited as an example, I wish it also to be cited as a warning. It lingered on, year after year, till it was brought forward, though by a discordant administration, as a ministerial measure; and that is the only way in which the catholic question ought to be treated."

Mr. Perceval's assassination, which, for the honour of the country, was the work of a madman, who, under a miserable hallucination, perpetrated the deed of blood, which awakened in every bosom the sincerest regret for the deceased, and the deepest commiseration for his bereaved family, rendered a change in the administration necessary. Offers were made to Mr. Canning, which he nobly refused, when he understood that no change had taken place in the cabinet on the subject of the catholic claims. Of a motion regarding their claims Mr. Canning gave notice on the very night he made the declaration to the house of his reason for declining office. On the 29th of June this motion was brought forward, and Mr. Canning delivered the following masterpiece of reasoning eloquence.

"When the extent and magnitude of the subject which I am about to press upon the consideration of the house, and the

debates which have taken place upon it, are considered, and also the anxiety which pervades every part of the empire, it may be apprehended that I shall be under the necessity of detaining the house a long time.

"If I came forward as a partisan, that might be the case; but not doing so, the subject lies in a narrow question; and till that question is set at rest, the empire never will be quiet. I trust, however, without adverting to former debates or inflammatory circumstances, to be able to induce the house to look at it as a great state question, surrounded with danger, indeed, but as one which, if it is wished to give peace to the empire, must be entertained; and if I can persuade gentlemen to lay aside all recollection of former debates, I flatter myself I shall be able to persuade them to agree to the proposition I am about to submit.

"One general rule is, that all citizens of the same state are entitled to the same privileges; and, if exceptions exist, the *onus probandi* lies on those who impose them, to show their necessity. I am also persuaded, at this time when we are opposed to an enemy so active and so powerful, no man would controvert the benefit which must result from a measure, which would tend to cement in affection every man in the empire against our inveterate and powerful foe. And the third general principle is, that where there exists in any state a great question, which has agitated the empire for a length of time, without any appearance of adjustment between the people of opposite opinions, it becomes the duty of the supreme power, wherever that supreme power may lie, to interfere and set the question at rest. I am aware there may be two objections: the first, the fear of innovation and change; and the other, the danger of concession.

"The assertion of fear of innovation carries with it an idea of a system of perfection already adopted. But I should be glad to know at what period of our history this divine system of things existed. Did it exist at the time when Christianity first spread its light over the country? Did it exist at the time of the reformation?—Will gentlemen come down lower, to the reign of Elizabeth (glorious, indeed, in some part of it, but, in the latter part, falling short of those who came before

her)? Will they look to the reign of Charles the First? What had Ireland then to boast of? Or will they look to the protectorate, and say, that was the time of perfection? Then came the revolution. Can you, gentlemen, say, then came perfection? No; then came confiscation: and from thence, through the reign of Anne, and down to the present time, has existed a system of artificial depression. And can gentlemen, looking to these circumstances, say, this is the place at which we should make our stand—this is a system on which we should make no innovation? To this system—the present penal code—alone it belongs, that no sooner had it arrived at perfection than it began to decline.

"The penal code was established at the commencement of the present reign, and in fifteen years (namely, in 1774) began the innovations made upon it. Before the relaxation of the code, Mr. Justice Blackstone made the following declaration on the laws it contained: 'In it,' he says, 'these laws, though not professedly sanguinary, are so severe, that they do all the mischiefs which it is possible to do in cold blood; but, perhaps,' he continues, 'when the time shall arrive that all fear of the pretender shall be done away, when the influence and power of the pope shall be reduced, it would not be amiss to revise and soften down these penal laws against the catholics.' Such a state of things having now arrived, it would be curious to trace the acts of relaxation which have taken place. The first relaxation was the act of 1774; and, in 1778, a second relaxation act passed, in the preamble to which it stated, 'that it could not but tend to the strength of the empire, that all persuasions of his majesty's subjects should enjoy the blessings of a free constitution.' And, six years after (in 1784), a further relaxation was made in their favour. The last act was that of 1793, and in the conclusion of the preamble of that act it was said, 'that, in consequence of the peaceable and loyal conduct of the catholics, it was thought right that they should be relieved from their disabilities.' Thus this penal code, which had been two centuries coming to perfection, having obtained that perfection in 1760, and continued in it for sixteen years, then began to decline, and has continued to decline now half a century. Two

or three experiments have been made, and the question now is, whether we should give full effect to those experiments.

"We read in the Roman history, that the Samnites having on one occasion obtained an advantage over a Roman army, and wishing to make the greatest advantage possible of the circumstance, the general sent a message to an ancient senator, requesting to know how he should treat the prisoners: the answer was, 'Send them home unransomed and unarmed.' The general, surprised at this answer, sent for further advice, and was told, 'Exterminate every man of them.' The different advice conveyed in the two answers made the Samnite general think his adviser deranged; he sent for him to the camp, and requested a further explanation of the difficulty. He was told then, that if he let them go free, he would lay a powerful state under the obligations of eternal gratitude; on the other hand, if he exterminated them, he would in so far prevent them from annoying him in future. Neither of these modes did he take, but he caused them ignominiously to pass under the yoke.

"Gentlemen, apply this in taking your view of the state of catholic Ireland. All further concession is objected to by some, because the principles of the catholic religion are such as would be likely to make us rue, one day, what we had done; but history does not bear this out. The religion is represented as an encroaching one, and yet we have seen it losing great part of Europe, without recovering any portion of its former hold upon it. On this subject I may mention the oath taken by the protestant sovereigns of Scotland, which was taken by King William and Queen Anne, and contained a clause in which they swore to root out all the heretics convicted of doctrines contrary to the true kirk; but it was observed that King William took it in his own sense of it, which meant no such thing. We must not deny the same liberty to other churches of expounding their own meaning. It would be as hard on the catholics as it would on King William. In the whole series of the statutes on the subject, there was no reliance to be placed on these people but by their oaths; and the last oath that bound them was drawn up by a learned doctor (Duigenan), who maintained they were not to be trusted, and yet, by his conduct, contradicted his as-

sertions. We must rest for security upon their conscientious and faithful adherence to the obligations, the good faith of which some are not disposed to deny.

"It has been said, we ought to be quiet, and satisfied by looking abroad at the condition of the people in other states. I object to this. We ought not to look abroad, but look at home: here we can compare ourselves with our fellow-subjects. We may have our speculations abroad, but our feelings at home.

"If we look abroad, we see a powerful enemy collecting people of all nations and tongues under his hostile banners against us, without distinction of religion. If towards another potentate, the emperor of Russia (at present, perhaps, to be numbered amongst our enemies), we see him with a schismatic chancellor, a catholic secretary, and a protestant general.

"Gentlemen, ask yourselves why your religion is to present an insuperable bar to your advancement? If you look to Austria, you may remember that Buonaparte, relying on false information respecting the Hungarians, issued a proclamation to grant them the free exercise of their religion, when he invaded the emperor's dominions; but he had no temptation to offer to the Hungarians; for the privileges and honours of the state were open to all. Then, why should the catholics be told to look abroad, to find sources of consolation at home? They might look to Spain; and I am sorry to say, that from recent publications there, I have seen something which I cannot justify. I have seen a proclamation which was the reverse of toleration, and which disgraced the Cortes as much as it excited surprise. They knew how freely their conduct had been commented upon here, to induce them to liberalise their system: but what that infant state would not do, we, in our enlarged condition, also refused to do. Might not Spain turn round, and say to us, 'Why do you hold populous, mature, adult Ireland, in the exclusion and fetters in which she was bound so many years?' Some persons picture out the cruelties of the Roman catholics, in the first periods of the reformation. But what should we say of being reminded of all the violence of the reformers; of the anabaptists in Munster; of the severities in the days of Henry the Eighth and Elizabeth; of the deliberate burning of Servetus; of the oath in Scotland, and of the furious

proceedings of John Knox? It is the duty of a wise legislature to prevent all such calamities by the earliest means. I have been shocked, in walking through the streets of the metropolis, to see a placard exhibited to the gaze of the vulgar, called, 'The Awful Warning of St. Bartholomew's.' Who the author was, I know not, and God forbid I should have any acquaintance with him; for what but the most mischievous effects can it be calculated to produce? Why should such a history as this be now published? What have the people now to do with the conduct of Charles the Eleventh of France, or with the Guises sprinkling themselves with the blood of an unfortunate victim, and the Duke of Angouleme surveying his murdered body with emotions of delight? This publication contained not only a history of the massacre, but was accompanied by plates to heighten the exhibition. There was also a name on the front of it, which I lamented to see. It was described as sacred to the memory of Mr. Perceval, whose relative situation to this country was represented as similar to that of De Coligny in France. Speaking of Mr. Perceval, likening him to De Coligny, it said, that he fell, like him, in the service of his king, his country, and his God! If, with a deep sense of a dispensation so awful and afflicting as that which has recently occurred in the murder of Mr. Perceval, I might think that Providence had given me any consolation, it was in sparing us from the mischiefs that might have been occasioned, had the foul assassin been either an Irishman or a catholic. In the earliest period of the French revolution, the massacre of St. Bartholomew was exhibited on the stage, as a public spectacle for the people, and why was it so exhibited? For the purpose of extinguishing animosities? No; but with a view to kindle animosities, and inflame those which already existed; not to put down the spirit of religious hatred, discord and persecution, but to provoke new massacres. The Cardinal Loraine was introduced on the stage, giving orders for the massacre; and Mr. Burke, adverting to this spectacle, in his letter to a member of the national assembly, said, that their citizens had assented to the massacre of the followers of Calvin at St. Bartholomew; and then asked, what he thought of their attempt to retaliate that massacre upon the people of this day? When I quote Mr. Burke, I cannot but recollect

what a great authority he is for the cause which I am now advocating. I cannot but recollect the sentiments of that great man upon this subject, outrunning upon this, as well as other occasions, with a prophetic foresight, the march of public opinion. I cannot forget that Mr. Fox advocated the same cause, and, in addition to these two great men, who might, perhaps, by some, be considered as too sanguine and too eager to carry their views into execution, before the public could be well prepared for them, I have to mention the name of Mr. Wyndham, whose mind was cast in a different mould; and who was always averse to innovations and the removal of existing restraints, until he had rigidly examined the ground, and weighed the consequences of the proposed alteration. I have to number Mr. Pitt, also, as the advocate of this cause, whose ardent zeal for public liberty was tempered by his views of practical utility. If the question, then, were to be determined on authority merely, I cannot but think that my cause is gained."

After some further observations, Mr. Canning concluded with moving—

"That the house will, early in the next session of parliament, take into its most serious consideration the state of the laws affecting his majesty's Roman catholic subjects in Great Britain and Ireland, with a view to such a final and conciliatory adjustment as may be conducive to the peace and strength of the united kingdom, to the stability of the protestant establishment, and to the general satisfaction and concord of all classes of his majesty's subjects. I beg leave to say, that the catholics of England are included in this general designation; and, although their uniform and undeviating loyalty and exemplary good conduct might entitle them to a distinct and even a partial consideration, yet, as they have themselves declined this distinction, I have united them in the same measure."

Mr. Canning's motion was carried by a majority of one hundred and twenty-nine.

How one's spirit is refreshed when reading such ennobling sentiments; and with what heartfelt satis-

faction do we behold a great and a good mind bursting asunder the manacles in which it was bound, disdaining to be governed by any other considerations than those of truth, justice, and humanity! But, indeed, it was not possible for the pitiful "No popery" faction long to retain within its thraldom an intellect of such reach and capacity. If we have any thing to regret, it is that Mr. Canning did not always stand erect on the high ground of principle, and refuse to join any administration that required him to sacrifice, or, at least, to compromise it. It was not manly for him to be won, however he might be wooed, by those with whom he never would act, without descending from his elevation, and sinking even to something below their level.

In the course of these Memoirs we have expressed our sentiments with freedom; and, especially, we have not affected to conceal our loathing abomination of all who would fan the flames of religious dissension, and arm one class of citizens against another. We think that the worst mischiefs that can afflict our country lie concealed in these weapons of a worldly warfare, "*The church is in danger*"—"*No popery.*" These have ever been the watchwords of persecution and intolerance. Yet it has occurred to us, that one, at least, of these favourite popular *ex cathedrâ* cries may be rendered the means of diffusing truth and liberty, if it be only once thoroughly understood. Allowing us our own interpretation of the words, we have no objection to join the most zealous orangeman in his favourite exclamation of "No popery."

But, then, in our view, the essence of popery is religious intolerance; it prevails just in proportion as

it is able to prostrate the civil rights of mankind before the demon of persecution, and to render them subservient to its own purposes of secular ambition. When religion, under any form which it may assume, calls in the power of the state to restrain in any degree the perfect freedom of worship, there popery lurks, and the subjects of an empire can never be free while a single vestige of it is permitted to remain. They are a nation composed of inquisitors and their victims. Toleration may interpose between them, but it does not change their relative character. It is the same spirit which prompts catholics to inflict civil disabilities upon protestants, and which induces protestants to retaliate similar disabilities upon catholics. The evil of persecution is most virulent when the church assumes domination over the state; and it is only slightly mitigated when the state interferes to govern the church. The dominant church is always the popish church, and betrays the spirit of the vatican in every act of legislation by which it would aggrandize itself at the expense of the unalienable rights of others, among which the most obvious and important is that of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of conscience, without exposure to civil injuries. O! when shall we all become true protestants, by bearing our solemn protest against every species of intolerance? It is inconceivable to what simplicity this would reduce the science of legislation. But, alas! the possession of power engenders the love of it; and nothing is held with so tenacious a grasp as that which confers distinction by depressing others. These, it may be said, are levelling principles, and aim at the annihilation of all established and national churches. But this by no means follows of necessity.

If we were asked, what a new country about to form for itself a civil constitution should do with religion? we would say, let it alone. It is very different where churches are already incorporated with the state, and they have both grown up together, under the shadow of a venerable antiquity. In such a case, we would not disturb the established order of things; but we should certainly, even for the sake of the national church itself, earnestly desire that it should cease from all interference with the civil rights either of individual or associated dissentients. We should say, all that a church requires, in order to secure its stability, is, that its clergy be properly educated, liberally supported, and their spiritual efficiency rendered certain by its ecclesiastical polity. We complain not of any church merely that it is established; but when it persecutes—and this it does whenever it assumes a right to tolerate—we feel that it is established in injustice; and so far, and only so far, we oppose it. Few statesmen in the old world carry their views of religious freedom to this extent; but the truth is, in general, they think too little of religion as a revelation from Heaven; and too much of it as an instrument of governing mankind, for which it was never intended, except as wielded by his hands who has said, "My kingdom is not of this world."

CHAPTER VIII.

Reconciliation with Lord Castlereagh—Still declines Office—Character rising throughout the Country—Invited to stand for Liverpool—Mr. Brougham and Mr. Creevy, the popular or Whig Candidates—Mr. Canning's conduct during the Election—His Speeches—The Victory of the allied Armies—The Gratitude of Parliament—November 18, 1813, at Liverpool—Mr. Canning's Speech on the 10th of January, 1814—Embassy to Lisbon—Mr. Whitbread's Satire on the Occasion—Mr. Canning's Return—Defence of himself against the Calumnies in Circulation on the Subject of his Embassy, extracted from his Speech at Liverpool—The Marquis of Anglesea's Leg.

WHETHER from considerations of a merely political nature, or from better principles, it is impossible to determine, the men who, but two years before, met for the purpose of mutual destruction, now, in appearance at least, abandoned their hatred, and consented to be reconciled. Mr. Canning and his noble adversary, through the mediation of their parliamentary friends, were thus prepared to act together in the relation of colleagues in office, should it be possible so to arrange the appointments in the cabinet, as to render such a coalition practicable. We blame not the reconciliation. This was required by the dictates of humanity and religion; but we are a little surprised that on the part of Mr. Canning any serious intention should ever have been cherished of acting with, much less under, the very individual from whom, on important principles of policy, he differed *toto cœlo*, and of whose incapacity to govern he had formally complained, both to the late Duke of Portland and to his sovereign. What could

have induced this voluntary humiliation of a naturally lofty spirit we cannot imagine, unless it were faith in the declaration of scripture, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Though by this step the greatest barrier to Mr. Canning's re-admission to office was removed, yet the negociations, which had been carried on for several months, went off on the old ground of the catholic question.

The general election which was now approaching was destined to commence a new æra in Mr. Canning's political life. He was now to stand before the country as the popular representative of one of the largest, freest, wealthiest, and most important towns of the empire, the representative of their unbiassed choice, exercised to an extent hitherto unprecedented in their history. If the ex-secretary was important to the administration, and if his talents were deemed indispensable to its vigour and stability when he was a member of parliament without constituents, deriving his political existence from the corruptions and abuses of the constitution, how immeasurably must his relative value have increased, either as the friend or the opponent of government, when he returned to St. Stephen's with all the glory and success of a member for Liverpool!

For our own parts, we hail not so much the event itself, which, in all its circumstances, was perhaps the most flattering homage that the voice of a community ever paid to individual character; but we rejoice in the opportunity which it afforded Mr. Canning of propounding the political doctrines, in the inculcation of which he was resolved to spend the remainder of his life; of displaying, amidst the collisions of party, the

urbanity of his manners and the kindness of his heart; and of explaining those parts of his public conduct, as well as of vindicating and illustrating those opinions which had exposed him to the grossest misrepresentations, and brought down upon his head the most severe and unmerited censures.

On the 25th of September, 1812, a meeting of the highest respectability was held at the Golden Lion Inn, Liverpool. It was convened for the purpose of inviting Mr. Canning to become a candidate at the approaching election to represent them in parliament, assuring him of their cordial and unanimous support. The following is a copy of the letter forwarded to Mr. Canning by this meeting, to which is subjoined his answer.

"Liverpool, October 1, 1812.

"Entertaining, as we do, the highest respect for, and the fullest confidence in, your talents, integrity, and public conduct, we feel a strong and anxious desire that this loyal and ancient borough should possess the high advantage of being represented by you in parliament; and we, therefore, do most earnestly invite you to offer yourself as a candidate at the ensuing election.

"Should you favour us by your compliance, we beg to assure you of our utmost zeal and exertions in your behalf; and, from the knowledge we possess of the very favourable sentiments generally entertained of you by the freemen and other inhabitants of this large and populous borough, we cannot permit ourselves for a moment to doubt your being returned to parliament by a large majority, notwithstanding any opposition that is or may be contemplated by others on the occasion.

"With the greatest respect,

"We have the honour to be,

"Sir,

"Your faithful and obedient servants,

"**** ****."

To this Mr. Canning replied:

"Mamhead House, near Exeter,
"Sunday, Oct. 4, 1812.

"Gentlemen,

"In returning from a more distant part of the country, upon intelligence of the dissolution of parliament, I am met here, this day, by your flattering invitation to Liverpool.

"I have not words to express my sense of the honour thus tendered to me. It is one which, unconnected as I am with the town of Liverpool, I certainly should never have presumed to think of soliciting; nor can I forbear, even now, entreating you to reflect, whether any advantage or satisfaction which you can hope to derive from choosing me one of your representatives can compensate the trouble which (I am led to apprehend) you may have to encounter in accomplishing that object.

"Having said this, if it be, nevertheless, your pleasure to call me to that distinguished situation, my services are at your command; I put myself into your hands; relying confidently upon the exertions which you will employ to give effect to your own wishes, and to vindicate your choice by making it triumphantly successful.

"Had I presumed, uninvited, to solicit your suffrages, it would have been incumbent upon me to address to you some profession of my public principles, and some exposition of my public conduct.

"As it is, you allow me to flatter myself that to your indulgent and favourable construction of those principles and that conduct (by which alone I am known to you) I am indebted for the invitation which I have this day received from you.

"I am not likely to swerve from principles which have procured to me so signal and gratifying a distinction.

"My conduct in parliament will always be governed by the best judgment which I am able to form of what is conducive to the welfare or essential to the honour of the country.

"I have only to add, that gratitude, as well as duty, will insure my unwearied attention to every thing that may affect the

peculiar interests of the town of Liverpool, or which can contribute to its prosperity.

"I have the honour to be,

"With the highest respect and acknowledgment,

"Gentlemen,

"Your most obliged and faithful servant,

"GEORGE CANNING."

On this occasion five candidates were put in nomination. The opponents of Mr. Canning were Mr. Brougham and Mr. Creevy. The contest was severe; but Mr. Canning was maintained, from the first, at the head of the poll. The exertions made on his behalf were unprecedented. The ladies, whom he complimented with equal delicacy and good humour, were enthusiastic in his cause. The men opposed to him, whose political sentiments recommended them to a very large portion of the freeholders of Liverpool, rendered it necessary for Mr. Canning to be explicit on the characteristic points which then divided parliament and the country, and that he should avow and maintain the grounds on which he was a candidate for their support, to the exclusion of his competitors. On the fifth day of the poll, he therefore entered upon some of these great topics. In allusion to what he had learned, during his canvass, of objections urged against him as the enemy of reform, he observes:

"In some of the societies which I have visited, a question has been put to me, whether I was prepared to support the question of parliamentary reform. I have heard that question in societies which, I suppose, my antagonists had previously visited, and to which they had described, in glowing colours, the blessings to be derived from a new-modelling of parliament, and had pointed out the inadequacy and defects of the present representation of

the people. Upon a point of this importance I will not equivocate. I freely own my mind is made up on the question. Gentlemen, I will *not* support the question of parliamentary reform. I will not support it, because I am persuaded, that those who are most loud and, apparently, most solicitous in recommending it do mean, and have, for years past, meant far other things than those simple words seem to intend; because I am persuaded, that that question cannot be stirred without stirring others which would shake the constitution to its very foundation; and because I am satisfied, that the house of commons, as at present constituted, is adequate to all the functions which it is wisely and legitimately ordained to execute; that showy theories and fanciful schemes of arithmetical or geographical proportion would fail to produce any amelioration of the present frame of the house of commons. I deny the grievance; I distrust the remedy. When it is asserted to me again, as I have often heard it asserted heretofore, that, under the present corrupt system, there is no true popular delegation, no uninfluenced or disinterested choice of representatives by the people, my mind will recur at once to the scene which is now before me, and will repose with perfect contentment upon the practical contradiction which Liverpool affords to assertions so disparaging to the people.

"When I have spoken in the house of commons, as I have done more than once, against a motion for parliamentary reform, I have been told, by those who supported the proposition, that my voice was good for little on such a subject; that I represented some insignificant borough, whose franchise it might be my interest to maintain, but which I maintained against the rights of the great body of electors of Great Britain. Gentlemen, to this reproach is it not your good pleasure to furnish me with a triumphant answer?"

Mr. Canning then develops his views on the catholic question, and states what we quoted in the first volume, in reference to the conscientious scruples of the king, as having deterred him for so many years from expressing his sentiments on that subject.

Messrs. Brougham and Creevy, without descending

to mean and base electioneering trickery, yet occasionally availed themselves of the little artifices which, on such occasions, are deemed perfectly legitimate, and are practised by all parties.

In reply to this species of oratory, to which the other candidates had resorted, on the sixth day's poll, Mr. Canning said:

"I will detain you no longer than while I advert to one topic which my opponents have studiously endeavoured to impress upon your minds, by the circulation of handbills and by emblematical devices; a topic as unfounded in fact as it is mischievous in tendency. They have exhibited a large loaf as the loaf of peace, and a small one as the loaf of war; intending, by these emblems, to show a necessary connexion between war and scarcity; and they have held out to you the return of Messrs. Brougham and Creevy to parliament as the certain safeguard for the plentiful subsistence of the people.

"If, gentlemen, the imaginers of these devices can prove to you, that their favourite candidates have power to direct the course of the seasons, and thereby to render more abundant the means of subsistence for the great body of the people, I should exhort you to pass me by, and return men who are possessed of so wonderful and so supernatural a secret.

"But, gentlemen, my habits of discussion have taught me to look for some connexion between effect and cause, and never to acquiesce in the conclusion until I have attempted to trace it to its premises. After the most serious investigation, I confess I am at a loss to discover the natural and necessary connexion between the bountiful blessings of Providence and the election of Messrs. Brougham and Creevy. Many of you have read a tale which is in the hands of your children: I mean Dr. Johnson's Rasselas, in which there is an account of a philosopher who fancied himself to have a control over the sunshine and the showers, and who busied himself in distributing the proper proportions of these favours, as he thought fit, to the different countries of the earth. Whether my competitors have a power like this I have not been able to ascertain. I do not mean to

impute to my competitors that they arrogate it to themselves; they are too manly and upright to attempt the practice of so gross a delusion. But their panegyrists, who couple plenty with their name and scarcity with mine, are as absurd as the philosopher in Rasselas: and they have not the excuse which he had for his folly; for, gentlemen, the philosopher was mad, but these reasoners can only be mischievous.

"Gentlemen, there is, in point of fact, no such necessary connexion between the question of war and the question of scarcity. I suppose any man will allow, that the present year is a year of as extended war as ever Europe witnessed. We have seen in the southern part of Europe the city of Madrid entered by the victorious troops of Great Britain; and we have this day heard, with horror, how the imperial city of the north has escaped from the ravages of the conqueror only by being consumed in flames of her own kindling. But, gentlemen, the same sun which gilded the triumphal entry of Lord Wellington into Madrid, and which turned pale at the conflagration of Moscow, has ripened, during the present year, both in the north and in the south, one of the most luxuriant harvests that ever blessed mankind. Before the war-loaf is paraded again, let the philosophers who support my antagonists bring me the solution of this phenomenon."

The contest was carried on between the different candidates with great temper; each did the other justice. They fought strenuously, and all panted for success; but there was no malice in their warfare; and when the vanquished left the field, they retired with dignity, while the victor, in the very height of his triumph, bore his honours meekly, and refrained from all exultation over a fallen enemy. It was when the great object of the struggle was nearly achieved by him that Mr. Canning said:

"I shall, I am sure, not offend, but gratify your feelings, if I take the opportunity, in this moment of expected, and, I may

almost say, assured victory, to say, that on the hustings, during the whole course of this contest, the conduct of my antagonists has been perfectly unexceptionable and gentleman-like; that our contest has been carried on without any thing like ill-humour or captiousness; without demonstration of any of those feelings which add bitterness to conflict and humiliation to discomfiture.

"Gentlemen, Mr. Brougham is a man of great talents; and, invited as he was by the entreaties and assurances of his friends, he could not well forbear presenting himself to you. Between him and me, gentlemen, the freemen of Liverpool have exercised their free choice. I need not say how flattered, how delighted I am by the preference; but the victory is yours, not mine. I presume not to claim it as a personal triumph.

"Gentlemen, between us, the candidates, there has been, as I said, no unkind or hostile feeling. When we quit you (the one triumphant, through your favour; the other with his hopes disappointed), let us have the satisfaction of hearing that the heats of the contest do not survive the occasion, and that we do not leave behind us in the town any unpleasant feelings to distract and disquiet your society."

After having been chaired, Mr. Canning deemed it seasonable and expedient to meet more at length the various imputations which had been cast upon him during the election. On the subject of having been in office, he expressed himself to the same effect as in the quotation which we have given in the 81st page of the first volume, adding:

"Gentlemen, if I have held office, I hope I have held it honourably: I will never hold it again but on the same terms. It is not my fault that I must state facts, in my own defence, which might appear to be stated ostentatiously; but I mean them simply as defensive. It is entirely my own fault, gentlemen, that I am not now addressing you with the seals of secretary of state in my pocket. Twice, in the course of the last six months, have the seals of the office of secretary of state been

tendered to my acceptance; and twice have I declined them. Is this like hankering after office? I declined them, not because I was unwilling to render any services of which my poor abilities were capable to my country; not because I did not acknowledge, with all due gratitude and humility, the gracious disposition of my prince; not because I shrink from the difficulties of the times, to the encountering and overcoming of which I should feel myself, from the public situation in which I have had the honour to stand, bound to render whatever aid was in my power, if I could do so with effect, by doing so with credit. I declined office, gentlemen, because it was tendered to me on terms not consistent, as I thought, and as my immediate friends agreed in thinking, with my personal honour; because, if accepted on such terms, it would not have enabled me to serve the public with efficiency.

"Gentlemen, I presume not to trouble you with any details upon this subject; but what I have stated, and what is before the world, is, I hope, sufficient to justify me against the accusation of hankering after office. Whether you will ever see me in office again I cannot tell; but of this I can assure you, that it shall not be in a way dishonourable to myself or to you. I dare not, indeed, reckon upon the continuance of such unmerited partiality and affection as you now so kindly heap upon me; but this I can answer for, that neither in nor out of office shall you have cause to be ashamed of me."

The following sentiments, which were uttered on the same occasion, deserve to be recorded. They breathe the genuine spirit of patriotism and manly independence. Indeed the Liverpool speeches exhibit the portraiture both of the mind and heart of the distinguished individual who delivered them.

"Of the cause of good government, in whatever hands the administration of government may be placed, even if in the hands of those to whom I have been politically opposed, I shall always be a faithful and steady supporter. But I do not pledge myself to you, I will never pledge myself to any man, to be the blind and subservient supporter of the administration in any

hands whatever. My general disposition is to support the government. What I find amiss, however, I shall blame with freedom; though I will not do so with any intention to excite discontent, nor at the hazard of mischief to the country.

"Gentlemen, if I did not retain the independence of my own judgment in the house of commons, I should be but an unworthy representative of the independent and enlightened community which sends me thither. It may happen, that your judgment may occasionally come in conflict with my own. Men of independent minds may honestly differ on subjects which admit of a variety of views. In all such cases, I promise you, not indeed wholly to submit my judgment to yours; you would despise me if I made so extravagant a profession: but I promise you that any difference of opinion between us will always lead me to distrust my own views, carefully to examine, and, if erroneous, frankly to correct them. Gentlemen, our judgments may clash, but our interests never: no interests of mine shall ever come in competition with yours. I promise you further, that, hoping, as I earnestly do, that the connexion, of which the foundation is this day auspiciously laid, may last to the end of my political life; yet if, unfortunately, occasions should occur (I cannot foresee or imagine any such), on which there should arise between us, on points of serious importance, a radical and irreconcilable difference of opinion, I will not abuse my trust, but will give you the earliest opportunity of recalling or reconsidering your delegation of it."

After some admirable remarks on the subject of peace and war, and deprecating war, except where it is a necessary evil, Mr. Canning concludes his speech at the public dinner on the 26th of October, a speech of splendid eloquence, every way worthy of his fame, in the following energetic style:

"I am not saying, (God forbid I should say so!) let us continue a war, otherwise unnecessary and avoidable, for the sake of military glory. I am not even quarrelling with that sober and staid philosophy which views all military glory as delusive

and dangerous to mankind. I am only desiring that there may be something of impartiality in our moral animadversions; and that, if (as I contend) peace cannot be had, and if (as is the natural consequence) war must be endured, we may be allowed, as well as our enemy, to mitigate (I will not say to compensate) what we suffer in privation, by what we gain in glory.

"Gentlemen, I do not say, that this splendid accession of military fame ought to make us enamoured of the war, or to reconcile us to persevering in it, if a solid peace were really attainable. But are they who impute this argument to us, and who maintain the adverse argument themselves, prepared to say, that peace, purchased at *any* price, is preferable to a war carried on with such sacrifices as we are making? If they are, I take the liberty of telling them, that one part of the price which we should now have to pay for peace, would be the surrender of our maritime rights, and therewith, at no distant time, of the very commerce for which they are so anxious to provide. If they answer, as they sometimes do, that they do not mean total surrender, then I reply, that they have, as I said before, no right to take the benefit to themselves of all the general arguments for peace in the abstract; for there are, in that case, certain terms on which they themselves would not make peace—on which they themselves would continue the miseries of war; and the question between them and us, therefore, is *not*, as they state it, 'Peace or war?' but, 'Is peace *now* attainable on terms such as even they would recommend or sanction?' This may be, and it is, a very weighty question; but it is *not* the question which has been so loudly clamoured in your ears, and the happy and easy solution of which was promised to you, if you would return my antagonists to parliament.

"Return them to parliament, you were told, and the streets of Liverpool would presently resound again with the hum of peaceful industry, and your ports would again be crowded with the commerce of the world. I have never answered these representations but by one question:—If England sink, how is Liverpool to survive? In other words, such ought, undoubtedly, to be the effects of peace; but that such should be its effects must depend upon the character of the peace, and not merely upon the name.*

"Character has sometimes been said to be an inconvenience. An individual of high reputation dares not do a dishonourable act, however it might contribute to a present advantage. A nation which has taken such a stand as Great Britain has now long maintained in the world cannot forfeit its honour without risking its very existence.

"If, indeed, the ingenuity of man could devise an arrangement by which the commercial interests of Liverpool could be saved at the expense of the general interests of the country, I might hesitate in presenting myself to you, in opposition to such an arrangement. But this is not attempted to be shown. It is argued, more broadly, that the country is in such a situation that we must yield, if not to a sense of the wickedness, at least to that of the hopelessness, of war; and must conform our conduct, not to our vital interests, but to our fallen fortunes. All the allies of Great Britain, we are told, are unfortunate. The converse of this proposition is nearer the truth. The unfortunate are, and have become by that very title, our allies. We have stepped forward to raise the fallen, to sustain the oppressed, to interpose between the prostrate victim and the descending sword of the conqueror. In all this I see nothing that impoverishes or impairs the national hope. I see much that exalts the national character. But, in truth, our interest is not at variance with our character: for scarcely is the commercial prosperity of Liverpool more closely interwoven with the greatness of the country, than is the permanent greatness and the safety of England connected with the peace and freedom of Europe.

"But, at least, it has been said, we need not have aggravated the evils of the war, in which we are already engaged, by measures which have added America to the number of our enemies. Upon this subject, without entering into the question of the original policy of the orders in council, we are furnished with an answer, so far as America is concerned, out of the mouths of our antagonists themselves. Whether the war was of our seeking, or was of the choice of the American government, need not now be argued: for it has been admitted, nay, contended, by our antagonists, however that may be, that the concession which has been made, on our part, was such as ought to have restored

peace. Whether that concession was wisely or improvidently made, might be a matter of controversy. I have no doubt myself upon the subject; but the thing is done, and I will not now argue about it. But, though whether it were wisely made or not be matter for controversy, that it was made fruitlessly, is matter of fact. Concession, therefore, is not an infallible recipe for peace. And the only advantage, that I know of, which the government will have gained by giving up a system of measures upon the principle of which (for I will say nothing of the details of its execution) they had stood firm for about five years, is in the promised support in parliament, upon American questions, of those members of the opposition who recommended this surrender.

"The orders in council being now defunct, it would be useless to take up your time with explaining and defending their principle, and showing (as I think I could show) that a steady adherence to it (if it had been steadily adhered to) would have afforded a chance, at least, of forcing upon the enemy a change of his anti-commercial system. The abandonment of them has not produced the specific good which was guaranteed to us, in the restoration of peace with America; we are now, therefore, to look for it, I hope, in that happy unanimity with which the war against America is henceforth to be carried on."

The remarks with which he concluded are spirited and just.

"Before the election took place, gentlemen, you heard enough, from the friends of our antagonists, of your own importance in the scale of the empire; and, no doubt, had you chosen as they wished, you would have continued to be, in their estimation and panegyrics, the first commercial town in England. But now I hear and read that you are little better than a rotten borough; a place of no account or rightful influence in the concerns of the country; warped by partial pursuits, and subservient to objects of individual gain.

"Not such, gentlemen, is my estimate of the importance of this great commercial community. There are those, indeed, who tell us, that the lords of the soil alone have an interest in the constitution, and ought alone to have weight in the councils

of England; a doctrine singularly coincident with that which is held by France, with respect to England herself, that extent of territory and of population alone confers a just right to sway and preponderance among nations, to the empire of the land and of the sea. Gentlemen, a similar answer may be given to both these arguments. Not to the possessors of the soil alone, but to those also who, by their commercial enterprise and honest industry, raise the acres of that soil to a hundredfold their value, belongs a share of weight in the representation of their country, and a due degree of influence in its public concerns. Great Britain, small in extent though she be, and neither blessed with natural fertility, nor with exuberance of population, as compared with the more favoured empires of the earth, yet, mighty and powerful by her acquired means, by her commercial and maritime strength, refutes the haughty pretension of territorial ascendancy; and, while she wields the trident, establishes her right to share the sceptre of the world."

Representing the second town of commercial importance in the kingdom, Mr. Canning took his seat in the new parliament, which met in the November of this year, under circumstances which afforded him every facility for the exercise of his talents, not only as a debater of unrivalled powers, but as the guardian and protector of the interests of his constituents. It is impossible to commend him too highly in either capacity. Liverpool found in him her steadiest friend, always ready to advance her prosperity; nor was any individual, however mean his station, or however violently opposed to Mr. Canning in politics, ever suffered to apply to him in vain. Whatever he could do he did promptly and impartially, and sent none dissatisfied from his presence. By this conduct he greatly augmented the number of his friends, while he was the pride and boast of those who had been the

principal means of introducing him to parliament. As an independent member, he joined no party; yet the course he adopted on several questions of moment had all the effect of an opposition. At the commencement of the year 1813, the newspapers in the whig interest circulated the following paragraph, which, not receiving contradiction from any of the parties, had a very powerful effect.

"The Marquis of Wellesley and Mr. Canning, with their respective parliamentary friends, have coalesced with the opposition. All differences between the Marquis and Mr. Grey have been removed; and, in consequence of an arrangement, highly satisfactory to all parties, Mr. Canning is to take Mr. Ponsonby's place, and to lead this powerful opposition in the house of commons." Whether such an arrangement was really contemplated we have not the means of knowing; it was certainly never carried into effect. On minor points Mr. Canning still continued to oppose the administration, which about this time made another unsuccessful effort to attach him to their body. The American war, the provocations to which, in the orders of council, he never approved, became the subject of discussion on the 18th of February; and as he considered conciliation and concession, on the part of the English government, more likely to exalt the tone of the enemy to increased insolence than to lead to any pacific results, he pleaded for the necessity of more vigorous measures, and condemned the supineness of ministers. In a very elaborate speech, in which he took a comprehensive view of the powers of the New World, he took occasion to observe, in reference to

the mischiefs of those who had the control of the navy, "I fear that the admiralty hold the pen, when they should lanch the thunder."

In the autumn of this year our military glory shone with peculiar lustre, while that of the haughty conqueror of the world was tarnished by his unparalleled perfidy, and the superior prowess of the British arms. The great victory of the allied powers called forth the admiring gratitude of parliament; on which occasion Mr. Canning distinguished himself as a statesman and an orator. Among many splendid passages which our limits will not suffer us to introduce, we cannot omit the following:

"What we have accomplished, is establishing the foundation upon which the temple of peace may be erected; and imagination may now picture the completion of that structure, which, with hopes less sanguine, and hearts less high, it would have been folly to have attempted to raise. We may now confidently hope to arrive at the termination of labour, and the attainment of repose. It is impossible to look back to those periods when the enemy vaunted, and we perhaps feared, that we should have been compelled to sue for peace, amid all the effervescings of joy, without returning thanks to Providence, that gave us courage and heart still to bear up against accumulating calamity. Peace is safe now, because it is not dictated: peace is safe now, for it is the fruit of exertion, the child of victory! Peace is safe now, because it will not be purchased at the expense of the interest and the honour of the empire: it is not the ransom to buy off danger, but the lovely fruit of the mighty means we have employed to drive danger from our shores.

"With reference to the vote of this night, as far as it may be considered prospective as to the exertions we are called upon in future to make, I must observe, that, even if our hopes of peace should be postponed, or even disappointed, is it nothing to reflect upon the posture we are enabled to assume, by the achievements we have already performed? Is it nothing to look

back upon the fallen, the crouching attitude of enslaved Europe, at a period not long distant, and compare it with the upright, free, undaunted posture in which she now stands? Living memory can recal no period when she was entitled to hold her head so high, and to bid such bold defiance to her enemy. What, let me ask, is the first and brightest fruit of the late successful conflict? First, that continuity of system—that instrument of not wholly ineffectual hostility against Great Britain, which, until lately, was supposed to be growing in strength and perfection, has been destroyed. That complex machine, directed against our trade, has received a blow which has shivered it to atoms. The enemy is doubly defeated; his arms and his artifices have failed. Burdened as it was, still there is something in the incomprehensible nature of commerce which rises under the weight of the most powerful tyranny. His efforts have been exhausted; his monarchy was reduced to sink our commerce; but, rising with tenfold vigour, it has defied his puny efforts, never to be repeated. The next point we have attained, is the destruction of his own darling system of confederation; I mean that system by which he has formed all the states of continental Europe into satellites of the French empire, that move only as it moves, and act only by its influence. They are now emancipated; the yoke has been removed from their shoulders. The nations rise superior to themselves—

> 'Free, and to none accountable, preferring
> Hard liberty before the easy yoke
> Of servile pomp!'

"But, since all the events of war are precarious, it is possible that, after retiring awhile, the tyrant of Europe (now no longer its tyrant) may again burst forward, and again, with desolation in his train, awhile victorious, attempt to collect the fragments of that system, and to reconstruct that mighty engine which we have shattered, but which once, guided by his hand, hurled destruction on his foes. It is impossible! After the defeats he has sustained, all confidence between him and his vassal states must be annihilated. Admitting that they may be compelled again to act, can he rely upon their exertions, or can they depend upon his support? He may go forth like that foul idol, of which we heard so much in the last year, crushing his

helpless victims beneath his chariot-wheels; but he never again can yoke them to his car, as willing instruments of destruction. Even if Austria, by base submission to the sacrifice of her honour, were to add the sacrifice of another daughter, and of another army of 30,000 men, that mutual confidence which existed at the commencement of the last campaign can never be restored.

"So much for the present state of Europe: but has this country gained nothing by the glorious contest, even supposing peace should be far distant? Is it nothing to Great Britain, even purchased at the high price stated by the noble lord, that, under all the severity of her sufferings, while her trade declined, that her military character has been exalted? Is it no satisfaction, no compensation to her to reflect that the splendid scenes displayed on the continent are owing to her efforts? that the victories of Germany are to be attributed to our victories in the Peninsula? That spark, often feeble, sometimes so nearly extinguished as to excite despair in all hearts that were not above it, which we lighted in Portugal, which was fed and nourished there, has at length burst into a flame that has dazzled and illuminated Europe. Shall it then be said that this struggle has had no effect upon the military character of Great Britain? At the commencement of this war, our empire rested upon one majestic column, our naval power. In the prosecution of the war, a hero has raised another stupendous pillar of strength to support our monarchy, our military pre-eminence. It is now that we may boast not only of superiority at sea, but on shore: the same energy and heroism exists in both the arms of Great Britain—they are rivals in strength, but inseparable in glory.

"If, at a future period, by successes we cannot foresee, and by aggressions we cannot resist, war should again be threatened upon our own shores, what consolation will the reflection afford, that out of the calamities and the privations of war has arisen a principle of safety, that, superior to all attacks, shall survive through ages, to which even our posterity shall look forward. Compare the situation of England with her condition even at the beginning of the last campaign, much more with her condition at the renewal of the war. Were we not then threatened by the aggression of an enemy even upon our own shores? Were we

not then trembling for the safety and sanctity even of our homes? Now contemplate Wellington encamped on the Bidassoa!"

After observing on the sickly sensibility of those who looked with dismay on the pending conflict, and some of its possible results, Mr. Canning continued:

"I cannot look with regret at a British army encamped upon the fertile plains of France: I cannot believe that any new grounds for apprehension are raised by an additional excitement being afforded to the irritability of the French people: I foresee no disadvantage resulting from entering the territories of our enemy, not as the conquered, but the conquerors: I cannot believe that there are any so weak as to imagine, that England wishes to maintain a position within the heart of the enemy's country, or that Spain will attempt to extend her dominion beyond that vast chain of impregnable mountains that seem to form her natural boundary. What is the fact? The Portuguese are now looking upon the walls of Bayonne, 'that circle in those wolves' that would have devastated their capital; the Portuguese now behold, planted on the towers of Bayonne, that standard that their enemy would have made to float upon the walls of Lisbon.

"I cannot think it a matter of regret that Spaniards are now recovering from the grasp of an enemy, on his own shores, that diadem which was stripped from the brow of the Bourbons, to be pocketed by an usurper. I cannot think it a matter of regret that England, formerly threatened with invasion, is now the invader; that France, instead of England, is the scene of conflict:

'——— Ultro Inachias venisset ad urbes
Dardanus, et versis lugeret Græcia fatis!'

I cannot think all this matter of regret; and if those who believe that I and the nation are blinded by our successes, I entreat that they will leave me to my delusion, and keep their philosophy to themselves.

"There are other observations, growing not only out of the proceedings of the last year, but since the commencement of

the war, that to my mind are highly consoling. It is a fact acknowledged by all, that our enemy, who has enslaved the press, and made it contribute so importantly to his own purposes of ambition at various periods during the hostilities, has endeavoured to impress upon all those who were likely to be our allies, a notion that Great Britain only fought to secure her own interests, that her views were completely selfish. That illusion is now destroyed, and the designs of this country are vindicated by recent events. We call on all the powers with whom we are at war to do us justice in this respect: above all, we claim it of America, with which, as much as any man, I wish for reconciliation. If she were now hesitating and wavering, which of the two great contending parties she should join, would not the conduct of England now decide the doubt? I ask her to review her own and the policy of this country, and to acknowledge that we are, not only of her confidence, but of the support of mankind. Now she can behold Buonaparte in his naked deformity, stripped of the false glory which success cast around him: the spell of his invincibility is now dissolved: she now can look at him without that awe which an uninterrupted series of victories had created. Were she now to survey him as he is, what would be the result? She would trace him by the desolation of empires and the dismemberment of states: she would see him pursuing his course over the ruins of men and of things: slavery to the people, and destruction to commerce; hostility to literature, to light and life, were the principles upon which he acted: his object was to extinguish patriotism, and to confound allegiance; to darken as well as to enslave; to roll back the tide of civilization; to barbarize, as well as to desolate mankind. Then let America turn from this disgusting picture, these scenes of bloodshed and horror, and compare with them the effect of British interference! She will see that wherever this country has exerted herself, it has been to raise the fallen, and to support the falling; to raise, not to degrade the national character; to rouse the sentiments of patriotism that tyranny had silenced; to enlighten, to re-animate, to liberate! Great Britain has resuscitated Spain, and recreated Portugal. Germany is now a nation as well as a name; and all these glorious effects have been produced by the efforts and by

the example of our country. If to be the deliverers of Europe; if to have raised our own national character, not upon the ruins of other kingdoms; if to meet dangers without shrinking, and to possess courage rising with difficulties, be admirable, surely we may not unreasonably hope for the applause of the world. If we have founded our strength upon a rock, and possess the implicit confidence of those allies whom we have succoured when they seemed beyond relief, then, I say, that our exertions during the last year, all our efforts during the war, are cheaply purchased: if we have burdened ourselves, we have relieved others; and we have the inward, the soul-felt, the proud satisfaction of knowing, that a selfish charge is that which, with the faintest shadow of justice, cannot be brought against us."

The speech concludes with these memorable words:

"May Great Britain still maintain that dignity of station, and support that grandeur and liberality of design, upon which she has hitherto acted—may she continue the unoppressive guardian of the liberties she has vindicated, and the disinterested protectress of the blessings she has bestowed!"

Every step we now advance with this illustrious man only reveals him to us under some new aspect of intellectual greatness. Every effort of his mind bears the impress of genius. Our language, rich as it is in eloquence, can furnish very few specimens of oratory that will bear comparison with the splendid effusions which Mr. Canning delivered at Liverpool on the 10th of January, 1814, during the recess, and when he was on a visit to his friends and constituents. The health of Mr. Canning being drunk, he rose and said:

"Gentlemen, as your guest, I thank you from my heart for the honourable and affectionate reception which you have given me. As the representative of Liverpool, I am most happy in meeting my constituents again, after a year's experience of each

other, and a year's separation; a year, the most eventful in the annals of the world, and comprising within itself such a series of stupendous changes as might have filled the history of an age.

"Gentlemen, you have been so good as to couple with my name the expression of your acknowledgments for the attention which I have paid to the interests of your town. You, gentlemen, I have no doubt, recollect the terms upon which I entered into your service; and you are aware, therefore, that I claim no particular acknowledgment at your hands for attention to the interests of Liverpool, implicated as they are with the general interests of the country. I trust, at the same time, that I have not been wanting to all or to any of you, in matters of local or individual concern.

"Having despatched what it was necessary for me to say on these points, I know, gentlemen, that it is your wish, and I feel it to be my duty, that I should now proceed to communicate to you my sentiments on the state of public affairs, with the same frankness which has hitherto distinguished all our intercourse with each other. That duty is one which it does not now require any effort of courage to perform. To exhort to sacrifices, to stimulate to exertion, to shame despondency, to divert from untimely concession, is a duty of a sterner sort, which you found me not backward to discharge, at a period when, from the shortness of our acquaintance, I was uncertain whether my freedom might not offend you. My task of to-day is one at which no man can take offence. It is to mingle my congratulations with your rejoicings on the events which have passed and are passing in the world.

"If, in contemplating events so widely (I had almost said so tremendously) important, it be pardonable to turn one's view, for a moment, to local and partial considerations, I may be permitted to observe, that, while to Great Britain, while to all Europe, while to the world and to posterity, the events which have recently taken place are matter of unbounded and universal joy, there is no collection of individuals who are better entitled than the company now assembled in this room (in great part, I presume, identically the same, and altogether representing the same interests and feelings as that of which I took leave in this

room about fourteen months ago) to exult in the present state of things, and to derive from it, in addition to their share of the general joy, a distinct and special satisfaction.

"We cannot forget, gentlemen, the sinister omens and awful predictions under which we met and parted in October, 1812. The penalty denounced upon you for your election of me was embarrassment to the rich, and famine to the poor. I was warned, that, when I should return to renew my acquaintance with my constituents, I should find the grass growing in your streets. In spite of that denunciation, you did me the honour to elect me; in spite of that warning, I venture to meet you here again. It must be fairly confessed, that this is not the season of the year to estimate correctly the amount of superfluous and unprofitable vegetation with which your streets may be teeming; but, without presuming to limit the power of productive nature, it is at least satisfactory to know, that the fields have not been starved to clothe your quays with verdure; that it is not by economizing in the scantiness of the harvest that nature has reserved her vigour for the pastures of your Exchange.

"But, gentlemen, I am sure you feel with me, that these are topics which I treat with levity only because they are not, nor were, at the time when they were seriously urged, susceptible of a serious argument: they did not furnish grounds on which any man would rest his appeal to your favour, or on which your choice of any man could be justified. If I have condescended to revert to them at all, it is because I would leave none of those recollections untouched which the comparison of our last meeting with the present, I know, suggests to your minds as well as to my own; and because I would, so far as in me lies, endeavour to banish from all future use, by exposing their absurdity, topics which are calculated only to mislead and to inflame. That the seasons would have run their appointed course, that the sun would have shone with as genial a warmth, and the showers would have fallen with as fertilizing a moisture, if you had not chosen me for your representative, is an admission which I make without much apprehension of the consequence. Nor do I wish you to believe, that your choice of any other than me would have delayed the return of your prosperity, or prevented the revival of your commerce.

"I make these admissions without fear, so far as concerns the choice between individuals. But I do not admit, that it was equally indifferent upon what principles that choice should be determined. I do not admit, that, if the principles which it was then recommended to you to countenance had unfortunately prevailed in parliament, and through the authority of parliament had been introduced into the counsels of the country, they would not have interfered with fatal operation, not indeed to arrest the bounty of Providence, to turn back the course of the seasons, and to blast the fertility of the earth, but to stop that current of political events which, 'taken at the flood,' has placed England at the head of the world.

"Gentlemen, if I had met you here again on this day in a state of public affairs as doubtful as that in which we took leave of each other; if confederated nations had been still arrayed against this country, and the balance of Europe still trembling in the scale, I should not have hesitated now, as I did not hesitate then, to declare my decided and unalterable opinion, that perseverance, under whatever difficulties, under whatever privations, afforded the only chance of prosperity to you, because the only chance of safety to your country; and the only chance of safety to the country, because the only chance of deliverance to Europe. Gentlemen, I should be ashamed to address you now in the tone of triumph, if I had not addressed you then in that of exhortation. I should be ashamed to appear before you shouting in the train of success, if I had not looked you in the face, and encouraged you to patience under difficulties. It is because my acquaintance with you commenced in times of peril and embarrassment, and because I then neither flattered nor deceived you, that I now not only offer to you my congratulations, but put in my claim to yours, on the extinction of that peril, on the termination of that embarrassment, and on the glorious issue to which exertion and endurance have brought that great struggle in which our honour and our happiness were involved.

"Gentlemen, during the course of a political life, nearly coeval with the commencement of the war, I have never given one vote, I have never uttered one sentiment, which had not for its object the consummation now happily within our view.

"I am not ashamed, and it is not unpleasing or unprofitable

to look back upon the dangers which we have passed, and to compare them with the scene which now lies before us. We behold a country, inferior in population to most of her continental neighbours, but multiplying her faculties and resources by her own activity and enterprise, by the vigour of her constitution, and by the good sense of her people,—we behold her, after standing up against a formidable foe, throughout a contest, in the course of which every one of her allies, and, at times, all of them together, have fainted and failed—nay, have been driven to combine with the enemy against her,—we behold her, at this moment, rallying the nations of Europe to one point, and leading them to decisive victory.

"If such a picture were merely the bright vision of speculative philosophy, if it were presented to us in the page of the history of ancient times, it would stir and warm the heart. But, gentlemen, this country is our own; and what must be the feelings which arise on such a review in the bosom of every son of that country? What must be the feelings of a community such as I am now addressing, which constitutes no insignificant part of the strength of the nation so described; which has suffered largely in her privations, and may hope to participate proportionably in her reward? What (I may be permitted to add) must be the feelings of one who is chosen to represent that community, and who finds himself in that honourable station at the moment of triumph, only because he discountenanced despair in the moment of despondency.

"From the contemplation of a spectacle so mighty and magnificent as this, I should disdain to turn aside to the controversies of party. Of principles, however, it is impossible not to say something; because our triumph would be incomplete, and its blessings might be transient, if we could be led astray by any sophistry; if we could consent, in a sort of compromise of common joy, to forget or to misstate the causes from which that triumph has sprung. All of one mind, I trust and believe, we are, in exulting at the success of our country; all of one mind, I trust we now are throughout this land, in determining to persevere, if need be, in strenuous exertion to prosecute, and I hope, to perfect, the great work so happily in progress. But we know that there are some of those who share most heartily in the

public exultation, who yet ascribe effects which happily cannot be disputed to causes which may justly be denied. No tenderness for disappointed prophecies, gentlemen, ought to induce us thus to disconnect effect and cause. It would lead to errors which might be dangerous, if unwarily adopted and generally received.

"We have heard, for instance, that the war has now been successful, because the principles on which the war was undertaken have been renounced; that we are at length blessed with victory, because we have thrown away the banner under which we entered into the contest; that the contest was commenced with one set of principles, but that the issue has been happily brought about by the adoption of another. Gentlemen, I know of no such change. If we have succeeded, it has not been by the renunciation, but by the prosecution of our principles: if we have succeeded, it has not been by adopting new maxims of policy, but by upholding, under all varieties of difficulty and discouragement, old, established, inviolable principles of conduct.

"We are told, that this war has of late become *a war of the people*, and that, by the operation of that change alone, the power of imperial France has been baffled and overcome. Nations, it is said, have at length made common cause with their sovereigns, in a contest which, heretofore, had been a contest of sovereigns only. Gentlemen, the fact of the change might be admitted, without, therefore, admitting the argument. It does not follow, that the people were not at all times equally interested in the war (as those who think as I do have always contended that they were), because it may be, and must be, admitted, that the people in many countries were for a time deluded. They who argue against us, say, that jarring interests have been reconciled. We say, that gross delusions have been removed. Both admit the fact, that sovereigns and their people *are* identified. But it is for them who contend that this has been effected by change of principles, to specify the change. What change of principles or of government has taken place among the nations of Europe? We are the best judges of ourselves—what change has taken place *here?* Is the constitution other than it was when we were told (as we often were told in

the bad times), that it was a doubt whether it were worth defending? Is the constitution other than it was, when we were warned that peace on any terms must be made, as the only hope of saving it from popular indignation and popular reform?

"There is yet another question to be asked. By what power, in what part of the world, has that final blow been struck which has smitten the tyrant to the ground? I suppose, by some enlightened republic; by some recently regenerated government of pure philanthropy and uncorrupted virtue: I suppose, by some nation which, in the excess of popular freedom, considers even a representative system as defective, unless each individual interferes directly in the national concerns; some nation of enlightened patriots, every man of whom is a politician in the coffee-house, as well as in the senate: I suppose it is from some such government as this, that the conqueror of autocrats, the sworn destroyer of monarchical England, has met his doom. I look through the European world, gentlemen, in vain: I find there no such august community. But in another hemisphere I do find such a one, which, no doubt, must be the political David by whom the Goliah of Europe has been brought down. What is the name of that glorious republic, to which the gratitude of Europe is eternally due,—which, from its innate hatred to tyranny, has so perseveringly exerted itself to liberate the world, and, at last, has successfully closed the contest? Alas, gentlemen, such a republic I do indeed find; but I find it enlisted, and (God be thanked!) enlisted alone, under the banner of the despot. But where was the blow struck? Where? Alas for theory! In the wilds of despotic Russia. It was followed up on the plains of Leipzig—by Russian, Prussian, and Austrian arms.

"But let me not be mistaken. Do I, therefore, mean to contend—do I, therefore, give to our antagonists in the argument the advantage of ascribing to us the base tenet, that an absolute monarchy is better than a free government? God forbid! What I mean is this, that, in appreciating the comparative excellence of political institutions, in estimating the force of national spirit, and the impulses of national feeling, it is idle,—it is mere pedantry, to overlook the affections of nature. The order of nature could not subsist among mankind, if there were

not an instinctive patriotism; I do not say unconnected with, but prior and paramount to, the desire of political amelioration. It may be very wrong that it should be so. I cannot help it. Our business is with fact. And, surely, it is not to be regretted, that tyrants and conquerors should have learned, from the lessons of experience, that the first consideration suggested to the inhabitant of any country, by a foreign invasion, is, not whether the political constitution of the state be faultlessly perfect or not; but, whether the altar at which he has worshipped,—whether the home in which he has dwelt from his infancy,—whether his wife and his children,—whether the tombs of his forefathers,—whether the palace of the sovereign, under whom he was born, and to whom he, therefore, owes (or, if it must be so stated, fancies that he, therefore, owes) allegiance, shall be abandoned to violence and profanation?

"That, in the infancy of the French revolution, many nations in Europe were, unfortunately, led to believe and to act upon a different persuasion, is undoubtedly true; that whole countries were overrun by reforming conquerors, and flattered themselves with being proselytes till they found themselves victims. Even in this country, as I have already said, there have been times when we have been called upon to consider, whether there were not something at home which must be mended, before we could hope to repel a foreign invader with success.

"It is fortunate for the world, that this question should have been tried, if I may so say, to a disadvantage; that it should have been tried in countries where no man in his senses will say, that the frame of political society is such as, according to the most moderate principles of regulated freedom, it ought to be;—where, I will venture to say, without hazarding the imputation of being myself a visionary reformer, political society is not such as, after the successes of this war, and from the happy contagion of the example of Great Britain, it is sure gradually to become. It is fortunate for the world, that this question should have been tried on its own merits; that, after twenty years of controversy, we should be authorized, by undoubted results, to revert to nature and to truth, and to disentangle the genuine feelings of the heart from the obstructions which a

cold, presumptuous, generalising philosophy had wound around them.

"One of the most delightful poets of this country, in describing the various proportions of natural blessings and advantages dispensed by Providence to the various nations of Europe, turns from the luxuriant plains and cloudless skies of Italy to the rugged mountains of Switzerland, and inquires, whether there, also, in those barren and stormy regions, the 'patriot passion' is found equally imprinted on the heart? He decides the question truly in the affirmative; and he says, of the inhabitant of those bleak wilds,

> 'Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,
> And dear that hill which lifts him to the storms;
> And, as a child, when scaring sounds molest,
> Clings close and closer to the mother's breast,
> So the loud torrent and the whirlwind's roar
> But bind him to his native mountains more.'

"What Goldsmith thus beautifully applied to the physical varieties of soil and climate, has been found no less true with respect to political institutions. A sober desire of improvement, a rational endeavour to redress error, and to correct imperfection in the political frame of human society, are not only natural, but laudable in man. But it is well that it should have been shown, by irrefragable proof, that these sentiments, even where most strongly and most justly felt, supersede not that devotion to native soil which is the foundation of national independence. And it is right that it should be understood and remembered, that the spirit of national independence alone, aroused where it had slumbered, enlightened where it had been deluded, and kindled into enthusiasm by the insults and outrages of an all-grasping invader, has been found sufficient, without internal changes and compromises of sovereigns or governments with their people—without relaxations of allegiance and abjurations of authority, to animate, as with one pervading soul, the different nations of the continent; to combine, as into one congenial mass, their various feelings, passions, prejudices; to direct these concentrated energies, with one impulse, against

the common tyrant; and to shake (and, may we not hope? to overthrow) the *Babel* of his iniquitous power.

"Gentlemen, there is another argument, more peculiarly relating to our own country, which has, at times, been interposed to discourage the prosecution of the war. That this country is sufficient to its own defence, sufficient to its own happiness, sufficient to its own independence; and that the complicated combinations of continental policy are always hazardous to our interests, as well as burdensome to our means, has been, at several periods of the war, a favourite doctrine, not only with those who, for other reasons, wished to embarrass the measures of the government, but with men of the most enlightened minds, of the most benevolent views, and the most ardent zeal for the interests as well as the honour of their country. May we not flatter ourselves, that, upon this point also, experience has decided in favour of the course of policy which has been actually pursued?

"Can any man now look back upon the trial which we have gone through, and maintain, that, at any period during the last twenty years, the plan of insulated policy could have been adopted, without having, in the event, at this day, prostrated England at the foot of a conqueror? Great, indeed, has been the call upon our exertions: great, indeed, has been the drain upon our resources; long and wearisome has the struggle been; and late is the moment at which peace is brought within our reach. But, even though the difficulties of the contest may have been enhanced, and its duration protracted by it, yet, is there any man who seriously doubts, whether the having associated our destinies with the destinies of other nations be or be not that which, under the blessing of Providence, has eventually secured the safety of all?

"It is at the moment when such a trial has come to its issue, that it is fair to ask of those who have suffered under the pressure of protracted exertion (and of whom rather than of those who are assembled around me—for by whom have such privations been felt more sensibly?)—it is now, I say, the time to ask, whether, at any former period of the contest, such a peace could have been made as would at once have guarded the national interests, and corresponded with the national character? I address

myself now to such persons only as think the character of a nation an essential part of its strength, and, consequently, of its safety. But if, among persons of that description, there be one who, with all his zeal for the glory of his country, has yet, at times, been willing to abandon the contest in mere weariness and despair,—of such a man I would ask, whether he can indicate the period at which he now wishes that such an abandonment had been consented to by the government and the parliament of Great Britain.

"Is it when the continent was at peace; when looking upon the map of Europe, you saw one mighty and connected system, one great luminary, with his attendant satellites circulating around him; at that period could this country have made peace, and have remained at peace for a twelvemonth? What is the answer? Why, that the experiment was tried. The result was, the renewal of the war.

"Was it at a later period when the continental system had been established? when two-thirds of the ports of Europe were shut against you? when but a single link was wanting to bind the continent in a circling chain of iron, which should exclude you from intercourse with other nations? At that moment peace was most earnestly recommended to you. At that moment, gentlemen, I first came among you. At that moment I ventured to recommend to you perseverance, patient perseverance; and to express a hope, that, by the mere strain of an unnatural effort, the massive bonds imposed upon the nations of the continent might, at no distant period, burst asunder. I was heard by you with indulgence; I know not whether with conviction. But is it now to be regretted, that we did not, at that moment, yield to the pressure of our wants, or of our fears? What has been the issue? The continental system was completed, with the sole exception of Russia, in the year 1812. In that year the pressure upon this country was undoubtedly painful. Had we yielded, the system would have been immortal. We persevered, and, before the conclusion of another year, the system was at an end; at an end, as all schemes of violence naturally terminate, not by a mild and gradual decay, such as waits upon a regular and well-spent life, but by sudden dissolution: at an end, like the breaking up of a winter's frost. But yesterday,

the whole continent, like a mighty plain covered with one mass of ice, presented to the view a drear expanse of barren uniformity: to-day, the breath of heaven unbinds the earth; the streams begin to flow again; and the intercourse of human kind revives.

"Can we regret that we did not, like the fainting traveller, lie down to rest—but, indeed, to perish—under the severity of that inclement season? Did we not more wisely, to bear up, and to wait the change?

"Gentlemen, I have said that I should be ashamed, and in truth I should be so, to address you in the language of exultation, if it were merely for the indulgence, however legitimate, of an exuberant and ungovernable joy. But they who have suffered great privations have a claim not merely to consolation, but to something more. They are justly to be compensated for what they have undergone, or lost, or hazarded, by the contemplation of what they have gained.

"We have gained, then, a rank and authority in Europe, such as, for the life of the longest liver of those who now hear me, must place this country upon an eminence which no probable reverses can shake. We have gained, or rather we have recovered, a splendour of military glory, which places us by the side of the greatest military nations in the world. At the beginning of this war, while there was not a British bosom that did not beat with rapture at the exploits of our navy, there were few who would not have been contented to compromise for that reputation alone; to claim the sea as exclusively our province, and to leave to France and the other continental powers the struggle for superiority by land. That fabled deity, whom I see portrayed upon the wall *, was considered as the exclusive patron of British prowess in battle; but, in seeming accordance with the beautiful fiction of ancient mythology, our Neptune, in the heat of contest, smote the earth with his trident, and up sprang the fiery war-horse, the emblem of military power.

"Let Portugal, now led to the pursuit of her flying conquerors,—let liberated Spain,—let France, invaded in her turn by those whom she had overrun or menaced with invasion, at-

* A figure of Neptune.

test the triumphs of the army of Great Britain, and the equality of her military with her naval fame! And let those who, even after the triumphs of the Peninsula had begun, while they admitted that we had indeed wounded the giant in the heel, still deemed the rest of his huge frame invulnerable,—let them now behold him reeling under the blows of united nations, and acknowledge, at once, the might of British arms and the force of British example!

"I do not say, that these are considerations with a view to which the war, if otherwise terminable, ought to have been purposely protracted; but I say, that, upon the retrospect, we have good reason to rejoice, that the war was not closed ingloriously and insecurely, when the latter events of it have been such as have established our security by our glory.

"I say, we have reason to rejoice, that, during the period when the continent was prostrate before France—that, especially during the period when the continental system was in force, we did not shrink from the struggle; that we did not make peace for present and momentary ease, unmindful of the permanent safety and greatness of this country; that we did not leave unsolved the momentous questions, whether this country could maintain itself against France, unaided and alone; or with the continent divided; or with the continent combined against it; whether, when the wrath of the tyrant of the European world has kindled against us with sevenfold fury, we could or could not walk, unharmed and unfettered, through the flames?

"I say, we have reason to rejoice, that, throughout this more than *Punic* war, in which it has so often been the pride of our enemy to represent herself as the Rome, and England as the Carthage, of modern times (with, at least, this colour for the comparison, that the utter destruction of the modern Carthage has uniformly been proclaimed to be indispensable to the greatness of her rival),—we have, I say, reason to rejoice, that, unlike our assigned prototype, we have not been diverted by internal dissensions from the vigorous support of a vital struggle; that we have not suffered distress nor clamour to distract our counsels, or to check the exertions of our arms.

"Gentlemen, for twenty years that I have sat in Parliament, I have been an advocate of the war. You knew this when you

did me the honour to choose me as your representative. I then told you, that I was the advocate of the war, because I was a lover of peace; but of a peace that should be the fruit of honourable exertion; a peace that should have a character of dignity, a peace that should be worth preserving, and should be likely to endure. I confess, I was not sanguine enough, at that time, to hope that I should so soon have an opportunity of justifying my professions. But I know not why, six weeks hence, such a peace should not be made as England may not only be glad, but proud to ratify. Not such a peace, gentlemen, as that of Amiens,—a short and feverish interval of unrefreshing repose. During that peace, which of you went, or sent a son to Paris, who did not feel or learn, that an Englishman appeared, in France, shorn of the dignity of his country; with the mien of a suppliant, and the conscious prostration of a man who had consented to purchase his gain or his ease by submission? But let a peace be made to-morrow, such as the allies have now the power to dictate, and the meanest of the subjects of this kingdom shall not walk the streets of Paris without being pointed out as the compatriot of Wellington; as one of that nation, whose firmness and perseverance have humbled France, and rescued Europe.

"Is there any man, that has a heart in his bosom, who does not find, in the contemplation of this contrast alone, a recompense for the struggles and the sufferings of years?

"But, gentlemen, the doing right is not only the most honourable course of action; it is also the most profitable in its result. At any former period of the war, the independence of almost all the other countries, our allies, would have been to be purchased with sacrifices profusely poured out from the lap of British victory. Not a throne to be re-established, not a province to be evacuated, not a garrison to be withdrawn, but this country would have had to make compensation, out of her conquests, for the concessions obtained from the enemy. Now, happily, this work is already done, either by our efforts or to our hands. The Peninsula free; the lawful commonwealth of European states already, in a great measure, restored; Great Britain may now appear in the congress of the world, rich in conquests, nobly and rightfully won, with little claim upon her

faith or her justice, whatever may be the spontaneous impulse of her generosity or her moderation.

"Such, gentlemen, is the situation and prospect of affairs, at the moment at which I have the honour to address you. That you, gentlemen, may have your full share in the prosperity of your country, is my sincere and earnest wish. The courage with which you bore up in adverse circumstances eminently entitles you to this reward.

"For myself, gentlemen, while I rejoice in your returning prosperity, I rejoice also that our connexion began under auspices so much less favourable; that we had an opportunity of knowing each other's minds, in times when the minds of men are brought to the proof,—times of trial and difficulty. I had the satisfaction of avowing to you, and you the candour and magnanimity to approve, the principles and opinions by which my public conduct has uniformly been guided, at a period when the soundness of those opinions, and the application of those principles, was matter of doubt and controversy. I thought, and I said, at the time of our first meeting, that the cause of England and of civilized Europe must be ultimately triumphant, if we but preserved our spirit untainted and our constancy unshaken. Such an assertion was, at that time, the object of ridicule with many persons: a single year has elapsed, and it is now the voice of the whole world.

"Gentlemen, we may, therefore, confidently indulge the hope, that our opinions will continue in unison; that our concurrence will be as cordial as it has hitherto been, if, unhappily, any new occasion of difficulty or embarrassment should hereafter arise.

"At the present moment, I am sure, we are equally desirous to bury the recollection of all our differences with others in that general feeling of exultation in which all opinions happily combine."

In the April of this year the allied armies entered Paris, and thus terminated a war which at its commencement and during its progress threatened the subversion of every throne in existence; it was brought

to an end by the total downfall of the colossal power, which, aiming at the phantom of universal empire, was hurled to the ground in a moment by the awakened indignation of the civilised world. Such was the glorious conclusion of a bad beginning. The same war that created the despotism of France, and rendered its armies the terror and the scourge of nations, was destined to achieve its destruction. This consummated the greatness of Mr. Pitt, in the view of his admirers. It was his system, it was loudly vaunted, that triumphed. It is true, his system destroyed the tyranny of Buonaparte; but to his system it is probable Buonaparte owed his political existence; it destroyed tyranny, but did it not first render abortive the struggles of the French nation for freedom? Could the revolution so soon have converted anarchy into despotism, without foreign interference; and might it not have been the harbinger of equal laws and just liberties, not only to France, but to all mankind, if the restoration of the Bourbons had not been the insane and sanguinary purpose of the allied sovereigns? These are great and difficult problems. We have yet to learn what Europe has really gained by the consummation of this purpose, which we acknowledge was most gloriously achieved. The HOLY ALLIANCE, perhaps, can tell us what privileges have been granted to subjects; what restraints have been imposed upon tyrants; what thrones are established in righteousness; and in what countries the people breathe the air of freedom. Our constitution has survived the shock; our liberties are unimpaired; and we have taught despots and their slaves to stand in awe of the British name. While the patriots of all nations must regard us with enthusiastic attachment, by Spain and Portugal

we shall be gratefully remembered to the latest posterity; for we aided their struggles, when they resolved to be free; and we mourn over their degradation, now they are for a season compelled to be slaves.

Mr. Canning's trip to Lisbon, in the character of an ambassador, where there was neither sovereign nor court to receive him, provoked in an equal degree invective and ridicule. It was viewed as a scandalous expenditure of the public money. The enormous sum assigned to the new ambassador excited universal astonishment; and never was the character of an individual, nor that of the administration, which had thus ingeniously found out a new species of *sinecure*, with which to extend its influence, more severely arraigned before the bar of the public. Early in November Mr. Canning sailed from Falmouth, and on the 8th, Mr. Whitbread observed,

"There is, certainly, nothing incredible in human life, and it may be still more positively asserted, that there is nothing so in political life; yet, I must confess, after all I have heard, that to me it requires the positive evidence of *The London Gazette*, before I can believe what I have just been told. Nay, even that would scarcely be enough. Had I not seen his majesty's ship the Leviathan, with the *blue Peter* flying on Friday, to take out the ambassador to Lisbon, I could not have believed it possible that the right hon. gentleman would have been away this day, from a discussion so interesting. I must say, however, that the right hon. gentleman has made the most ample and honourable amends to his former colleagues in office. He has accepted a situation under those who, on a former occasion, he had not deemed fit persons for him to advise with. If I admire the amends which his excellency the ambassador to Portugal has now made, I cannot less admire the selection of the situation which he has chosen, or to which he has been appointed. When I first heard of what was going forward, I thought it was possible that Mr. Canning was going to take the place of Lord

Castlereagh at the congress at Vienna; who, it was rumoured in some quarters, was to return to attend business in parliament. I should have deprecated such an appointment; thinking, as I do, that the right hon gentleman is disqualified for concerns of difficult diplomacy. He might have been deputed to Ghent, to arrange matters with the commissioners from America; but to that appointment I should also have felt serious objections. But to send the right hon. gentleman where he is now sent, I cannot see what important services he can render. It may, however, be said, that where he is going he can do no harm; certainly, in this view of it, the appointment is one of the happiest ever made. He cannot have gone out to receive the prince regent of Portugal, if it is true that his royal highness does not intend to return to Lisbon for some months hence. Yet the right hon. gentleman, now ambassador at Lisbon, may find out the means of amusing himself there. He can employ his leisure hours in revising the pages of the Anti-Jacobin, or in writing a poem to emulate Camoens; or, as it was said of Buonaparte, and like Mr. Bubb Doddington, in writing memoirs of the great things of his own time."

Mr. Herries followed in the same strain: he designated the whole transaction as an "outrageous job;" and particularly dwelt on Mr. Canning's accepting an appointment under Lord Castlereagh. With regard to the sum of 14,000l. per annum, granted to Mr. Canning, as an ambassador, it was contended by his friends that there was nothing peculiar in this; that, in fact, large as the sum appeared, when the circumstances were explained, it would be evident that, instead of receiving more, the right hon. gentleman received less than other illustrious plenipotentiaries who were supposed to have been treated with an inferior degree of liberality. It was truly stated, that the ordinary allowance to our ambassadors is 8,000l. per annum; that beyond this allowance extraordinary pay-

ments occur, to be made by every minister abroad. That Sir Charles Stuart, Mr. Canning's predecessor, expended, in this way, in 1812-13, the sum of 26,000l. 7s.; and, in the years 1813-14, the sum of 19,900l. 5s. 6d.; whereas, Mr. Canning's allowance was to exclude all further expenses; so that, in fact, he was to receive 6,000l. per annum less, and not 6,000l. more than his immediate predecessor.

Mr. Ellis defended his absent friend with great zeal:

"I happen to know," he observed, "that it had been the determination of Mr. Canning to go to Lisbon, long before there was any question of his taking a public situation. The cause of this determination was the pressure of a severe domestic affliction; and the idea that the only means of saving the life of a child of his, was to try the benefit of the climate at Lisbon. If, under these circumstances, the house should think that there is no great crime in my right hon. friend determining to go to Lisbon, I do not suppose that they will consider it any great aggravation of the offence, to accept afterwards of a public situation. As to the time of his departure, I am convinced that my right hon. friend has neither hastened nor delayed it, from any fear of being attacked in this house. As to my right hon. friend's propriety of conduct in accepting an official situation, that is open to be canvassed, like the acts of every public man."

Mr. Ellis then went into a detail of the expenses of former ambassadors, and stated that Mr. Canning himself objected to having an unlimited sum for extraordinaries; and that the limitation was adopted entirely on his suggestion.

It is fortunate too that we have Mr. Canning's own account of this appointment. If popular elections have their evils, these evils are more than counterbalanced by their advantages. At the election at Liverpool, in

the year 1816, Mr. Canning's conduct in this affair was very freely canvassed. The charges against him were preferred in his presence, and thus the fairest opportunity of self-vindication was afforded him.

"Gentlemen, the next material charge against me, and it behoves me to meet it fairly, is on the score of my absence from you for the last eighteen months, and the situation which I held, during a part of that interval, at Lisbon.

"With respect to the cause of my departure, and of my solicitation to my friends here, to accept my resignation, and supply my place, if they could not, consistently with the interests of the town, indulge me in a temporary absence, you are all apprised of the facts; and I have to thank you all for your indulgence. I know, gentlemen, that you believe me when I say, upon my honour, that my departure from England originated not, in the slightest degree, in any view to the appointment which, indeed, was incidentally cast upon me, after my private arrangements had been made. The moment that I learnt the Prince Regent of Portugal's determination not to return last year to his European dominions, I resigned. It is false, gentlemen, as (I am told) is asserted, that I continued in a public capacity to the period of my leaving Lisbon. Of the seventeen months, or thereabouts, which I passed in Portugal, the last six months I was as private an individual as any among you; and it was no fault of mine that I was not much sooner superseded: it was in the month of April last year that I sent in my resignation. I remained there, according to my original intention, invested with no public character, discharging no public duty, and receiving, in consequence, no public pay. Nor can I imagine how the mistake (if mistake be the true name) could have arisen, as to my continuing in a public character, unless it were that, being settled in Lisbon, I did continue, long after the expiration of my public character, to receive such of my countrymen as happened to come recommended to me with such civility as the means of a private individual could allow."

During Mr. Canning's short residence at Lisbon, a

splendid dinner was given him by the resident British merchants. On his health being drank, the hon. gentleman rose, and said:

"I am deeply sensible, gentlemen, of the honour done to me by this meeting, and I am highly flattered by the sentiments with which you have been pleased to couple my name.

"To have been a disciple of Mr. Pitt, and to have been a sharer in those councils in which originated the struggle for the salvation of Portugal, are the two circumstances in my political life on which, if on any, I look back with pride and gratification.

"It is a pride to me to have imbibed the principles of Mr. Pitt, and a gratification to receive your testimony of the just application of those principles to the measures by which this country was saved; principles of which the characteristic was to cherish order and industry at home, as the true sources of commercial opulence and national strength; abroad to consider the peace, and power, and safety of Great Britain as bound up with the security of other nations.

"From this system of internal and external policy, Great Britain derived the means, and imposed upon herself the duty, of sustaining the long contest with France, which preceded the war of the Peninsula.

"In pursuance of that policy, those who had the direction of the British councils at the moment when the grasping hand of France was extended to seize the crown and liberties of Portugal, did not hesitate to fly to her assistance; the good sense, the feeling, and the generosity of the British nation went with their government in the undertaking. But sanguine and visionary enthusiasts, I well remember, were they deemed to be, who thought that from the struggle for Portugal might issue the deliverance of Europe! Such an enthusiast I was, and always avowed myself to be. I made this avowal even in times when the contest was most doubtful, and, by many, held to be desperate.

"True it was, that clouds and darkness occasionally gathered on the horizon; but, even through those clouds, and through that darkness, I saw, or fondly fancied I saw, a ray of light which promised to pierce the gloom, and might hereafter lighten all the nations.

"It is not at this time of day, or in this spot, that I am called upon to justify these hopes against the imputation of extravagance. Whether as a just and natural consequence of perseverance in a good cause, or whether by the special favour of Providence, true it is, in fact, that from this nook of Europe proceeded that impulse by which its mightiest kingdoms have been set free: true it is, that in this sterile and unpromising soil was deposited the seed of that security whose branches now overshadow mankind. From these recollections and associations the land in which we are assembled derives an animating and classic interest even in the eyes of the most indifferent observer. For my own part, I cannot view this city in which for so many months of horror and anxiety the hopes of Europe lay trembling for their doom—I could not traverse those mighty fastnesses of nature which fence this capital, those bulwarks behind which victory herself retired to new plume her wings for a flight more soaring and more sustained—I could not contemplate those holy ruins amongst which I have been wandering, where an awful curiosity pauses to inquire whether the surrounding destruction has been wrought by ancient convulsions of nature, or by the sportive sacrilege and barbarous malignity of the foe—I cannot behold the traces of desolation in this country, and of suffering among the people,—without rendering a just homage to the character of the nation which by all that it has done, and more, by all that it has endured, has raised itself to a pitch of moral eminence so far beyond the proportion of its territory, population, or power.

"I cannot consider all these things without blessing that wise and beneficent policy which brought England with timely speed to the aid of such a nation, to call forth its energies—to marshal its resources—to support and invigorate its unyielding constancy, and, after its own deliverance was achieved, to lead it forth in pursuit of its oppressor.

"To have fought together in such a cause—to have mingled banners, and to have mingled blood, in battles of such interests, and leading to such results, must undoubtedly cement an eternal union between the British and Portuguese nations.

"You will observe, gentlemen, that I am anxious to state the principle of our connexion, and of our claims upon each

other, in terms, not of comparison, but of equality. I do so with sincerity, because I believe that statement to be just—I might do so from policy, even if I doubted of its justness.

"Portugal would not have been saved without England, it is true; but Portugal was to England a main instrument for the mightier task which England had to perform.

"We brought hither councils, arms, and British discipline, and British valour; we found here willing hearts and active hands—a confiding government—a people brave and enduring, docile in instruction, faithful in following, patient under privations, not to be subdued by disaster, and not to be intoxicated by success. The arm of England was the lever that wrenched the power of Buonaparte from its basis: Portugal was the fulcrum on which that lever moved. England fanned and fed the sacred fire—but Portugal had already reared the altar on which that fire was kindled, and from which it mounted, brightening and widening, until the world was illumined with the blaze.

"I have said that, even from motives of policy, I would state as nearly equal as possible the balance between Portugal and England. There is a principle of disunion in unequal connexions. Active beneficence is a virtue of easier practice, than forbearance after having conferred, or than thankfulness after having received, a benefit. I know not, indeed, whether it be a greater and more difficult exercise of magnanimity for the one party to act as if he had forgotten, or for the other as if he constantly remembered, the obligation.

"On the part of Great Britain, let us bear in mind, that the feelings to which we addressed ourselves in Portugal were those of national pride and independence. If those feelings were found equal to the occasion, what wonder, or what regret, that they should have survived it? It is naturally to be expected, that, having accomplished the overthrow of its enemies, the genius of the nation should carry itself with somewhat of a bolder and freer port, even towards its friends. We have no right to feel this sorely—it would be neither just nor becoming in us to do so. We should respect, even in its excess, an independence that we have vindicated, and should pardon even the waywardness of a spirit which we have raised.

"To Portugal, on the other hand, I would say, that there is

no humiliation in the sentiment of national gratitude; that a grateful mind is at once indebted and discharged, and recovers its level, by a just acknowledgment that there is no room for either commercial or political jealousy between Great Britain and Portugal; that the world is large enough both for Portuguese and British commerce; and that Great Britain, while she has never been wanting to her ally in time of need, seeks no other reward for all her exertions, and all her sacrifices, than mutual confidence and common prosperity.—I am sure that I shall be rightly understood by all those in whose presence I speak, not only as to my meaning, but as to my motives. The delicacy of the situation in which the local government of this kingdom is placed, the weight of their responsibility, and the anxiety which (as I have witnessed) necessarily attends it, entitles them to peculiar consideration. I have no fear of their disavowing the assurance which I give you of their friendly disposition towards this meeting; and I venture, therefore, to propose to you, gentlemen, in the confidence that you will receive it cordially, and that your cordiality will be duly estimated and returned—'The health of their Excellencies the Governors of the Kingdoms.'"

In the April of the year 1815, Mr. Canning resigned his appointment of ambassador; and, in the March of the following year, he returned to England. The battle of Waterloo has rendered this year for ever memorable. "It was the harvest of death." Thousands met on that sanguinary field never to part, and many that escaped will retain through life the deep scars of honour which were inflicted in that dreadful conflict. Some minds are so constituted, that they throw an air of pleasantry over the most serious misfortune, and extract from pain itself the jest and the *bon mot*. The Marquis of Anglesea, then Earl of Uxbridge, was so severely wounded on this occasion, that the amputation of one of his legs was

deemed necessary. Mr. Canning wrote the following *jeu d'esprit*, which was published under the title of an

EPITAPH ON THE MARQUIS OF ANGLESEA'S LEG.

Here rests—and let no saucy knave
Presume to sneer and laugh,
To learn that mouldering in the grave
Is laid a *British calf!*

For he who writes these lines is sure
That those who read the whole
Will find such laugh was premature,
For here, too, lies a *sole.*

And here five little ones repose,
Twin born with other five,
Unheeded by their brother toes,
Who all are now alive.

A leg and foot—to speak more plain—
Rest here, of one commanding,
Who, though his wits he might retain,
Lost *half his understanding.*

And when the guns, with thunder fraught,
Pour'd bullets thick as hail,
Could only in this way be taught
To give the foe *leg bail.*

And now in England, just as gay
As in the battle brave,
Goes to the rout, review, or play,
With one foot in the grave.

Fortune in vain here show'd her spite,
For he will still be found,
Should England's sons engage in fight,
Resolved to stand his ground.

But Fortune's pardon I must beg;
She meant not to disarm;
And when she lopp'd the hero's leg,
She did not seek his *h-arm*.

And but indulged a harmless whim,
Since he could walk with one,
She saw two legs were lost on him
Who never meant to run.

CHAPTER IX.

Mr. Canning a Member of the Administration—Second Election for Liverpool—Dissolution of Parliament—Third Election—The Indemnity Bill—The revered and ruptured Ogden—Pamphlet attributed to Mr. Hobhouse—A Challenge—More's bitter Satire—Mr. Canning's Vindication—Speech on the State of the Nation—Allusion to the Westminster Election, occasioned by the Death of Sir Samuel Romilly—Fourth Election for Liverpool—Epitaph on the Death of his Son—The Arrival of Queen Caroline—Proceedings in Parliament—Mr. Canning's Defence of Ministers—His Determination not to take any further Part in any Measures against the Queen—His Resignation—The Court of East India Directors—Mr. Canning's Answer to their Vote of Thanks—Meeting of Proprietors of East India Stock—Vote of Thanks—And Answer to the same—Appointment to be Governor-General of India—Contemplated Departure—Visit to Liverpool to take leave—Presentation of a Piece of Plate from his late Constituents—Death of the Marquis of Londonderry—Return to Office.

THAT which had been so often attempted in vain was at last effected. Mr. Canning again accepted office, as president of the board of control, in the early

part of the year 1816. Those who were anxious that his character for magnanimity and undeviating adherence to a policy in all respects the reverse of that which was pursued by Lord Castlereagh, can never contemplate his official subordination to one so much his inferior, and whom he had publicly declared to be deficient in capacity for any station of high responsibility, without deep regret. He soon felt himself in trammels, and was compelled at length to dissolve a connexion which he found to be incompatible with his honour.

By his acceptance of office Mr. Canning, of course, vacated his seat, and had, therefore, once more to risk the dangers of a popular election, with all the odium which, on such occasions, is usually attached to pensioners and placemen. By the gracious permission of his royal highness the Prince Regent, he was allowed to visit his constituents before he had stood in his presence, to perform the customary homage of kissing his royal highness's hand on his appointment. The ex-ambassador and the newly chosen president had a difficult task before him, for the whigs and radicals were determined to contest his election. A real candidate, indeed, could not be found to enter the lists with him; but the factious spirit of hostility was not to be subdued by trifling obstacles. A name, or rather the shadow of a name, was obtruded upon the electors, and from this phantom Mr. Canning experienced great vexation and delay before he could secure the object of his ambition.

Mr. Leyland, a gentleman of large fortune, and a magistrate for the county, was, against his consent, and, in defiance of his remonstrance, put in nomi-

nation; on the first day he was represented by a clergyman, who was distinguished from the great body of his reverend brethren, not by the ardour with which he entered into politics, but by the side which he espoused, and the popular principles which he fearlessly maintained. He exhibited the singular spectacle of a churchman preferring the rights of the people to ecclesiastical promotion. Finding his cause hopeless, he retired, withdrawing at the same time the name of his principal. This, however, did not avail to terminate the contest; several voluntary substitutes thrust themselves forward, and continued still to poll for Mr. Leyland. Mr. Canning, who displayed through the whole election the most admirable equanimity of temper, could not help expressing his feelings:

"Of the gentleman (said he) whose name is thus unwarrantably put forward against his own desire, I beg not to be understood as meaning to speak with the slightest disrespect. Of the gentleman who constituted himself the representative of the nonjuring candidate, I mean Mr. Shepherd, I have to say, that his conduct appears to me to have been, in all that I have seen of it, not only exempt from blame, but entitled to the praise of fairness, honour, and liberality. But who they are that, after the abjuration of the principal, and after the abdication of the substitute, have put themselves in array against the declared sense of all parties, to vex and harass the population of this great town, and who hazard thus, for no object and to no end, all the results which may arise from the fermentation which they have excited, it behoves me not to conjecture; nor will I characterise their proceedings with the epithet that I think they deserve."

The riots that occurred on the second and third days of this election were utterly disgraceful to the

popular party, or the "phantom gang," as they were called, and produced very serious mischief. On the fifth day the vanquished party retired, not, however, before they had resorted to every species of abuse, with the view of lessening Mr. Canning in the opinion of his constituents. One miscreant designated him "an adventurer, whose father nobody knew." To some of the calumnies which had been most unsparingly heaped upon him, he condescended to reply in his speech, after he had undergone the ceremony of being chaired:

"Gentlemen (he said on this occasion), with the election, let the local topics, the local enmities, the local disagreements of the election cease. But cease not with the election the principles upon which your choice has been founded, on whomever, at any time hereafter, your choice may fall, whether on myself or on a worthier object. For, gentlemen, I know how little I ought to consider myself as contributing to the glorious result of this contest. Much less important is it to whom, individually, you commit your representation in parliament, than that you should fix steadily in your minds the standard by which that representative shall be tried. Let him be a man true to the principles of the constitution, not as understood in the new-fangled doctrines of the day, but as transmitted to us from older times, before the pure current of British freedom had been contaminated by the influx of foreign theories.

"Gentlemen, we all know, that, on the former occasion, in 1812, the eyes of England were, in a great measure, fixed upon Liverpool, as the *arena* in which the contest between two sets of political principles was to be decided. But on that occasion, gentlemen, though you occupied a great space in the public attention, you could not completely monopolize it. There was then a general election. The interest excited, indeed, by the Liverpool contest was pretty widely diffused, but the actual warfare was among ourselves; no stranger had leisure to mingle in our battle. Among other consequences of this state

of things, one was, that we were tolerably free from imported calumny: and that, considering the vehemence of the contest, there was, so far as I know, little of personal malignity mixed with it. In the present instance, Liverpool alone has fixed the undistracted attention of both parties, and upon me, in particular, have the full phials of whiggish wrath being discharged.

"Standing thus exposed, I have had what some would call the misfortune, but what I must now esteem the singular happiness, of being a mark for the attacks of every political enemy that I have in the world. I do Liverpool the justice to acknowledge, gentlemen, that the grossest and foulest calumnies are not of native produce, but have been rolled down, in one tide of filth, from the fountain-head of whiggish detraction in London. All the approved practices of the libellers of former periods have been resorted to: my private history ransacked for topics of abuse; every action, every inconsiderate word, of earlier life raked up, and recorded with malignant industry; and invention called in aid where research could find no theme of invective:—

——————'The lie, so oft o'erthrown,
Th' imputed trash and nonsense, not my own;'

all, all has been exhausted: and what is the result? That here I stand.

"Gentlemen, amongst other charges, one of fair hostility, but whimsically chosen, considering the quarter from which it comes, is, that of my being about to act in public life with men from whom I have occasionally differed in opinion. Gentlemen, the charge is substantially unfounded. It is unfounded, because, though, on particular questions, I may have differed from many of my present colleagues, (as what two men may not occasionally differ, if each has an opinion of his own?) yet, upon all the great outlines of our political system, and upon every main principle affecting the foreign policy of England, our opinions have generally concurred. Those opinions I have, to the best of my power, supported, in whatever hands the government of the country has been placed. I have supported them not less strenuously when myself out of office, than when I formed a part of the administration."

Here a temporary interruption ensued, and Mr. Canning retired; but being again called for, he resumed as follows:

"By the organ of what party is it that I am accused of inconsistency, for acting with men from whom I may have occasionally differed? Why, gentlemen, by the organ of a party whose birth and growth, whose essence and element are coalition; a party which sprung from the coalition between Lord North and Mr. Fox, and which has been revived, within all our memories, by the coalition between Lord Grenville and Lord Grey; a party of which, in spite of all its coalitions, the members are, in reality, so little *coalescent*, that, but last year, on the greatest question whichever the government of this country was called upon to decide, and its parliament to sanction, on the question of the renewal of the war against Buonaparte, they were divided half and half: and all that was of most weight or ornament in their party, fought the battle of the ministers against the remainder. That remainder, indeed, true to their old creed, would have extended the doctrine of coalition to Buonaparte. But you, gentlemen, I know, have candour enough to do justice to public men, of whatever party, when they stand up fairly for their country; and you remember, with just acknowledgment, that the manly and consistent eloquence of Lord Grenville, the splendid enthusiasm of Grattan, and the commanding energy of Plunkett were exerted on that memorable occasion, in defence of that system of measures by which, in defiance of the whig policy, this country and Europe have been preserved.

"Gentlemen, there is yet a heavier charge than either of those which I have stated to you. It is, gentlemen, that I am an adventurer. To this charge, as I understand it, I am willing to plead guilty. A representative of the people, I am one of the people; and I present myself to those who choose me only with the claims of character (be they what they may), unaccredited by patrician patronage or party recommendation. Nor is it in this free country, where, in every walk of life, the road of honourable success is open to every individual,—I am sure it is not in this place, that I shall be expected to apologise for

so presenting myself to your choice. I know there is a political creed, which assigns to a certain combination of great families a right to dictate to the sovereign and to influence the people; and that this doctrine of hereditary aptitude for administration is, singularly enough, most prevalent among those who find nothing more laughable than the principle of legitimacy in the crown.

"To this theory I have never subscribed. If to depend directly upon the people as their representative in parliament; if, as a servant of the crown, to lean on no other support than that of public confidence, if that be to be an adventurer, I plead guilty to the charge; and I would not exchange that situation, to whatever taunts it may expose me, for all the advantages which might be derived from an ancestry of a hundred generations.

"Gentlemen, I will not detain you longer. I have said, that I will not go back to any of the events of the election. Suffice it that, whatever may be my opinion with respect to the opposition which has been made to your wishes in my favour, I can truly say for myself, that I carry no resentments away with me. Even were I disposed to entertain any such feelings, my heart would not, at this moment, have room for them, so full is it of the sense of your kindnesses, of acknowledgment, and of exultation."

The interval between this election and the general election of 1818 was marked by several events of importance, but none of which, in a particular manner, called forth the talents of Mr. Canning. The opening of parliament, on the 28th of January, 1817, was attended by a disgraceful riot, which endangered the royal person of the Prince Regent, whose carriage was violently assailed by the mob in its progress to the house of lords. An alarming spirit of insubordination became visible in various parts of the country, encouraged and fermented by Cobbett and Hunt, and their worthy coadjutors, Preston, Watson, Evans, and Thistlewood. It was deemed expedient to resort

to the suspension of the habeas corpus act; and subsequently, after the immense assemblages at Manchester and other places had discovered that the constitution was violated on the popular side, and that the security of the throne and the rights of the people were alike threatened by a lawless mob, headed by designing and guilty demagogues, the legislature passed those celebrated six acts, which, however they may appear to infringe upon the liberty of the subject, were the actual means of saving the country from all the horrors of anarchy. To the passing of these acts we are indebted for one of the most elaborate and eloquent of Mr. Canning's speeches; and to what passed, during the discussion of the act of indemnity, in consequence of the suspension of the habeas corpus act, Mr. Canning had to trace the most virulent and galling attacks which, during his political life, he had ever been called to sustain. We shall notice both of them in order.

On the 10th of June, 1818, parliament was dissolved; and Mr. Canning, at the requisition of 589 of his former electors, presented himself the third time as a candidate for Liverpool. Mr. Leyland's party not being able to prevail upon that gentleman to give even a negative consent to his name being set in opposition to Mr. Canning, turned their attention to the Earl of Sefton, who was not unwilling to stand. The noble earl was personated during the contest by Lord Molineux, his lordship's son, who, by his amiable and conciliating manners, gained the esteem and approbation of all parties. Three real candidates were actually engaged on the hustings, when, on Saturday, the third day, the friends of Lord Sefton, says the edi-

tor of the Liverpool speeches, had recourse to the novel expedient

"Of opening a second bar for his lordship, by nominating Arthur Heywood, Esq. The reason of this proceeding was obvious. The voters for Lord Sefton had, from the opening of the poll, been rapidly decreasing in number. His friends, therefore, with a view to diminish his minority, and to poll the freemen for his lordship with greater rapidity, adopted the plan of opening a second bar for him, in the name of Mr. Heywood. But they soon lost whatever benefit they expected from this manœuvre. The friends of Mr. Canning, to counterbalance any apparent advantage which their antagonist might derive from it, also resolved to nominate John Bolton, Esq.; and a bar was immediately opened in the name of that highly respected gentleman.

"The delay occasioned by these extraordinary proceedings greatly retarded the poll on Saturday. But the still more extraordinary proceedings of Monday threw them into comparative insignificance. Colonel Williams appeared on the hustings, and was put in nomination on the part of Lord Sefton. Some opposition was made to the colonel's nomination; it was, however, after considerable discussion, carried into effect. The gallant colonel, after reading his reasons for the proceeding, insisted, that the oaths against bribery and corruption and the long oath should be administered, indiscriminately, to all the freemen who came to poll. This was agreed to. The nomination of Colonel Williams, on the part of Lord Sefton, was followed by the nomination of John Bridge Aspinall, Esq., on the part of General Gascoyne. Three real candidates and four nominal ones were now on the hustings. The real and nominal candidates were afterwards augmented to the number of nine, for whom the like number of bars were opened, and a round of tallies was actually polled at each of the nine bars. The confusion occasioned by the multiplicity of candidates now became inconvenient, and even ludicrous: but 'confusion was soon worse confounded' by the nomination of an additional number of nominal candidates, who now amounted to eighteen, and, with three real candidates, made, in the whole, *twenty-one!* a num-

ber unprecedented in the annals of contested elections. The hustings became a scene of the greatest confusion; and the polling was again much retarded by the extraordinary proceedings of the day. The inconvenience produced by the anomaly indicated the proper remedy. The nominal candidates abdicated, by mutual consent, their separate claims, and the twenty-one bars were reduced to four. The exception was in favour of Mr. Heywood's bar, which was allowed to be kept open from a principle of accommodation."

Mr. Canning, at the close of the poll on the fourth day, in allusion to these whimsical proceedings, said:

"Gentlemen, if I have been longer than usual this evening in reaching the place from which I am to address you, you are to attribute it to the accident of my being, according to an arrangement agreed to by all the candidates, the last to leave the hustings this day. And, under these circumstances, you will be rather surprised that I am not later still, when I tell you, that the number of candidates for the honour of representing you in parliament has been, in the course of this day, not less than *twenty-one!*

"Gentlemen, you have all read, no doubt, the Letters of Lord Chesterfield. It is upon the authority of that polite writer, I think, that it has been laid down as a maxim, that, for the perfect enjoyment of social comfort, a company ought not to be less numerous than the Graces, nor more numerous than the Muses. Gentlemen, your candidates, when we set out, were equal in number to the Graces only; and, so long as that analogy was preserved, we went on most courteously together. On Saturday that analogy was abandoned by the addition of two candidates. Disorder immediately ensued: but we had no sooner reached the hustings this morning, than an attempt was made to repair it, by raising our number to nine. Bars were actually opened for candidates equal in number to the Muses; but not, that I could see, with any increase of harmony from that association.

"Gentlemen, having tried that mystical number for one round (just time enough to induce lord Sefton's friends to inscribe 'HARMONY AND SEFTON' on their flag), it was found,

that the Muses were any thing but a security for harmony. The harmony which followed the adoption of their number was, indeed, of that species for which certain concerts (called, I know not how justly, after our neighbours the Dutch) are celebrated, where every man is said to play his own tune upon his own instrument!

"Unluckily, the effort to escape from this confusion was not so well considered as it was, no doubt, well intended. By adding to the number nine, nine more, and three more to that, till, by regular progression, we rose to the number that I have stated, twenty-one, I cannot help thinking, that we rather augmented than diminished the complication of our affairs.

"The list, however, of twenty-one, which I hold in my hand, but which the excessive state of pressure in which I see you prevents me from reading to you, contains many names of individuals which you would hear with kindness and respect.—[*Cries of 'Read, read!'*] But, then, gentlemen, there are others of a different description.—[*Cries of 'Read, read!'*] No, gentlemen. The concert which I have described is, happily, terminated; and, as many of the performers were advertised without their own consent, and were never persuaded to take a vocal part in it, I should do unfairly in bringing their names before you for criticism and comparison.

"But, gentlemen, I say, seriously and sincerely, it was a great satisfaction to me to find, that, in case of real necessity, there were so many men in this town, of the principles which you approve, who could have been brought forward to put down any combination against your interests and freedom. Among these names, as I told you on Saturday, my respected host (who now stands near me) was one; and, as I then announced to you this fact, and the motive of his allowing himself to be put in nomination, I owe it him to say, that, that motive having ceased, he has lost no time in relinquishing his short trial of public life; and, giving up all claim to your suffrages, has gladly withdrawn again into that privacy which he loves, and which, you all know, he adorns.

"Gentlemen, I was for some time at a loss to conceive what could possibly have put it into the head of that venerable magistrate, colonel Williams (for he it was who started this extra-

ordinary arithmetical progression to-day, by presenting himself as a candidate;) I was at a loss, I say, to conceive, what could have suggested it to his imagination, that, amongst all the things that were wanting in this contest, and on his own side, candidates were the materials in which they were most deficient! From all I had before heard, I had reason to suppose, that of candidates they had enough, and that voters were principally wanting. But, it seems, it was reserved for this sagacious politician not only to discover where the want really pinched, but who was the fittest person to supply it. My difficulty, however, was in a great measure solved, when I recollected the worthy colonel's passion for parliamentary reform. The fashions of London travel down to the country, and are sometimes mistaken and disfigured in rural imitation. I am persuaded, that, something in this way, colonel Williams, having learned, from major Cartwright, that *universal suffrage* was the one thing necessary in politics, has only made a small mistake in the application of that doctrine, and has conceived the major to intend, not that every man should vote, but that every man be a candidate! Under such a conception (however misapprehended) nothing could be more praiseworthy than colonel Williams's tender of his services. Of this plan of reform it may, at least, be said, that, as it is the newest, so it is the most simple and most innocent that colonel Williams could possibly pursue.

"The expedient, however, having been tried, we have all, by common consent, grown weary of it; and, after having indulged a little of that ill-humour which will break out in the best regulated controversies, we have found, happily not too late, that we had better return towards the point from which we set out. We have so returned; not, indeed, precisely to the original number of the Graces, but to that number with the ornamental addition only of Mr. Heywood, as a sort of master of ceremonies. You have now again three real candidates offering themselves to your choice; and Mr. Heywood is so good as to stand by to see fair play."

At the dinner given to Mr. Canning by his friends at the Music Hall, he addressed them at great length.

This speech may be considered as the best argument ever made against parliamentary reform. It will be admired for its ingenuity; it will be quoted by all who buy and sell in St. Stephen's political temple, the money changers will lift it up for ever as a shield against the whips of small cords that would drive them out. We cannot quote the entire speech, but the following extracts contain the essence of the reasoning on this great subject.

"Gentlemen, it does seem somewhat singular, and I conceive that the historian of future times will be at a loss to imagine how it should happen, that, at this particular period, at the close of a war of such unexampled brilliancy, in which this country has acted a part so much beyond its physical strength and its apparent resources;—there should arise a sect of philosophers in this country, who begin to suspect something rotten in the British constitution. The history of Europe, for the last twenty-five years, is something like this:—A power went forth, animated with the spirit of evil, to overturn every community of the civilised world. Before this dreadful assailant, empires, and monarchies, and republics bowed: some were crushed to the earth, and some bought their safety by compromise. In the midst of this wide-spread ruin, among tottering columns and falling edifices, one fabric alone stood erect and braved the storm; and not only provided for its own internal security, but sent forth, at every portal, assistance to its weaker neighbours. On this edifice floated that ensign, [pointing to the English ensign,] a signal of rallying to the combatant, and of shelter to the fallen.

"To an impartial observer, I will not say to an inhabitant of this little fortress—to an impartial observer, in whatever part of the world, one should think something of this sort would have occurred:—Here is a fabric constructed upon some principles not common to others in its neighbourhood; principles which enable it to stand erect while every thing is prostrate around it. In the construction of this fabric there must be some curious felicity, which the eye of the philosopher would be well

employed in investigating, and which its neighbours may profit by adopting. This, I say, gentlemen, would have been an obvious inference. But what shall we think of their understandings who draw an inference directly the reverse? and who say to us—'You have stood when others have fallen; when others have crouched, you have borne yourselves aloft: you alone have resisted the power which has shaken and swallowed up half the civilised world. We like not this suspicious peculiarity. There must be something wrong in your internal conformation.' With this unhappy curiosity, and in the spirit of this perverse analysis, they proceed to dissect our constitution. They find that, like other states, we have a monarch: that a nobility, though not organized like ours, is common to all the great empires of Europe: but that our distinction lies in a popular assembly, which gives life, and vigour, and strength to the whole frame of the government. Here, therefore, they find the seat of our disease. Our peccant part is, undoubtedly, the house of commons. Hence our presumptuous exemption from what was the common lot of all our neighbours: the anomaly ought forthwith to be corrected; and, therefore, the house of commons must be reformed.

"Gentlemen, it cannot but have struck you as somewhat extraordinary, that whereas, in speaking of foreign sovereigns, our reformers are never very sparing of uncourtly epithets; that whereas, in discussing the general principles of government, they seldom omit an opportunity of discrediting and deriding the privileged orders of society; yet, when they come to discuss the British constitution, nothing can be more respectful than their language towards the crown; nothing more forbearing than their treatment of the aristocracy. With the house of commons alone they take the freedom of familiarity: upon it they pour out all the vials of their wrath, and exhaust their denunciations of amendment.

"Gentlemen, this, though extraordinary, is not unintelligible. The reformers are wise in their generation. They know well enough—and have read plainly enough in our own history—that the prerogatives of the crown and the privileges of the peerage would be but as dust in the balance against a preponderating democracy. They mean democracy, and nothing else. And, give

them but a house of commons constructed on their own principles—the peerage and the throne may exist for a day, but may be swept from the face of the earth by the first angry vote of such a house of commons.

"It is, therefore, utterly unnecessary for the reformers to declare hostility to the crown; it is, therefore, utterly superfluous for them to make war against the peerage. They know that, let but their principles have full play, the crown and the peerage would be to the constitution which they assail, but as the baggage to the army—and the destruction of them but as the gleanings of the battle. They know that the battle is with the house of commons, as at present constituted—and that, *that* once overthrown, and another popular assembly constructed on their principle—as the creature and depository of the people's power, and the unreasoning instrument of the people's will—there would not only be no chance, but (I will go further for them in avowal, though not in intention, than they go for themselves) there would not be a pretence for the existence of any other branch of the constitution.

"Gentlemen, the whole fallacy lies in this: the reformers reason from false premises, and, therefore, are driving on their unhappy adherents to false and dangerous conclusions. The constitution of this country is a MONARCHY, controlled by two assemblies: the one hereditary, and independent alike of the crown and the people: the other elected by and for the people, but elected for the purpose of controlling and not of administering the government. The error of the reformers, if error it can be called, is, that they argue as if the constitution of this country was a broad and level democracy, inlaid (for ornament sake) with a peerage, and topped (by sufferance) with a crown.

"If they say, that, for such a constitution, that is, in effect, for an uncontrolled democracy, the present house of commons is not sufficiently popular, they are right; but such a constitution is not what we have, or what we desire. We are born under a monarchy, which it is our duty, as much as it is for our happiness, to preserve; and which there cannot be a shadow of doubt that the reforms which are recommended to us would destroy.

"I love the monarchy, gentlemen, because, limited and con-

trolled as it is in our happy constitution, I believe it to be not only the safest depository of power, but the surest guardian of liberty. I love the system of popular representation, gentlemen. Who can have more cause to value it highly than I feel at this moment—reflecting on the triumphs which it has earned for me, and addressing those who have been the means of achieving them? But of popular representation, I think, we have enough for every purpose of jealous, steady, corrective, efficient control over the acts of that monarchical power, which, for the safety and for the peace of the community, is lodged in one sacred family, and descendible from sire to son.

"If any man tell me, that the popular principle in the house of commons is not strong enough for effective control, nor diffused enough to ensure sympathy with the people, I appeal to the whole course of the transactions of the last war; I desire to have cited to me the instances in which the house of commons has failed, either to express the matured and settled opinion of the nation, or to convey it to the crown. But I warn those who may undertake to make the citation, that they do not (as, in fact, they almost always do) substitute their own for the national opinion, and then complain of its having been imperfectly echoed in the house of commons.

"If, on the other hand, it be only meant to say, that the house of commons is not the *whole government* of the country—which, if all power be not only *for* but *in* the people, the house of commons ought to be, if the people were adequately represented—I answer, thank God it is not so!—God forbid it should ever aim at becoming so!

"But they look far short of the ultimate effect of the doctrines of the present day, who do not see that their tendency is not to make a house of commons such as, in theory, it has always been defined—a third branch of the legislature; but to absorb the legislative and executive powers into one; to create an immediate delegation of the whole authority of the people—to which, practically, nothing could, and, in reasoning, nothing ought to stand in opposition.

"Gentlemen, it would be well if these doctrines were the ebullitions of the moment, and ended with the occasions which naturally give them their freest play; I mean, with the season

of popular elections. But, unfortunately, disseminated as they are among all ranks of the community, they are doing permanent and incalculable mischief. How lamentably is experience lost on mankind! for when—in what age, in what country of the world—have doctrines of this sort been reduced to practice, without leading, through anarchy, to military despotism? The revolution of the seasons is not more certain than is this connexion of events in the course of moral nature.

"Gentlemen, to theories like these you will do me the justice to remember that I have always opposed myself; not more since I have had the honour to represent this community, than when I was uncertain how far my opinions on such subjects might coincide with yours.

"For opposing these theories, gentlemen, I have become an object of peculiar obloquy: but I have borne that obloquy with the consciousness of having discharged my duty; and with the consolation, that the time was not far distant when I should come here among you (to whom alone I owe an account of my public conduct)—when I should have an opportunity of hearing from you, whether I had (as I flattered myself) spoken the sense of the second commercial community in England; and when, if—unfortunately and contrary to my belief—I had separated myself in opinion from you, I should learn the grounds of that separation.

"Gentlemen, my object, in political life, has always been, rather to reconcile the nation to the lot which has fallen to them (surely, a most glorious and blessed lot among nations!) than to aggravate incurable imperfections, and to point out imaginary and unattainable excellencies for their admiration. I have done so, because, though I am aware that more splendidly popular systems of government might be devised than that which it is our happiness to enjoy, it is, I believe in my conscience, impossible to devise one, in which all the good qualities of human nature should be brought more beneficially into action—in which there should be as much order and as much liberty, in which property (the conservative principle of society) should operate so fairly, with a just but not an overwhelming weight, in which industry should be so sure of its reward, talents of their due ascendancy, and virtue of the general esteem.

"The theories of preternatural purity are founded on a notion of doing away with all these accustomed relations,—of breaking all the ties by which society is held together. Property is to have no influence, talents no respect, virtue no honour, among their neighbourhood. Naked, abstract political rights are to be set up against the authorities of nature and of reason: and the result of suffrages, thus freed from all the ordinary influences which have operated upon mankind from the beginning of the world, is to be the erection of some untried system of politics, of which it may be sufficient to say, that it could not last a day, that, if it rose with the mists of the morning, it would dissolve in the noontide sun.

"Gentlemen, one ill consequence of these brilliant schemes, even where they are the visions of unsound imagination, rather than the suggestions of crafty mischief, is, that they tend to dissatisfy the minds of the uninformed with the actual constitution of their country.

"To maintain that constitution has been the unvarying object of my political life: and the maintenance of it, in these latter days, has, I have said, exposed me to obloquy and to hatred; to the hatred of those who believe either their own reputation for sagacity, or their own means of success, to be connected with a change in the present institutions of the country."

After this splended defence of the third estate of the realm, and which has confessedly wrought all the wonders ascribed to it, by its eloquent advocate, it is but justice to quote a high and equally gifted authority on the other side. Sir James Mackintosh, in his celebrated letter to the right honourable William Pitt, makes the following forcible representation and appeal to the premier of that day.

To the argument supposed to be urged by Mr. Pitt, in defence of his political apostacy, that reform was no longer desired by the people, who were contented and happy under his wise and conciliatory government, Sir James remarks:

"Granting even that no *actual* or urgent evil arises from the corrupt state of the pretended representation of the people—granting that it has not within the last eight years cost us thirteen colonies, a hundred thousand lives, and the accumulation of a hundred and fifty millions of debt; making all these concessions, what argument do they furnish to you? Are the *necessary tendencies* of an institution no reason for reforming it? Is it because these *tendencies* are suspended by some accidental circumstance, that we are to tolerate them until they are again called forth into destructive energy? Had you been a senator under Titus, if any man had proposed controls on the despotic authority of the emperor, and if he had justified his proposition by reminding the senate of the ferocity of Nero, or the brutality of Vitellius, you must, on such a principle, have opposed to his arguments the happiness derived from the existing government, till your sophistry was confuted, and your servility rewarded by Domitian.

"It is thus easy to expose your pretexts, even without disputing your assumptions. But it is time to retract concessions which truth does not permit, and to prove that the absurdity of your conclusions is equalled by the falsehood of those premises on which they are established.

"The question, whether those grievances now exist, which in your opinion once justified a parliamentary reform, will be best decided by considering the nature of such grievances, and the tendency of such a reform to redress them. The grievance is, the perpetual acquiescence of the house of commons in the dictates of the ministers of the crown. The source of this grievance is the enormous influence of the crown in the house of commons. The remedy is, to render that house, by changing the modes of its election, and shortening the duration of its trust, dependent upon the people, instead of being dependent upon the crown.

"Such is the brief state of the subject. Can you then have the insolence to assert, that the influence has decreased in your time, or that it has produced a less abject acquiescence? That influence and that acquiescence are the grievances which are to be reformed; and as no impudence can deny that they exist in their full force, so no sophistry can escape the inference, that the necessity for reforming them remains undiminished. Have ma-

jorities in your time been less devoted? Have the measures of the court been less indiscriminately adopted? Has the voice of the people been less neglected? Has the voice of the minister been less obeyed? Not one of these things are true; not one, therefore, of the reasons for reform have ceased to operate.

"But to argue the question in this manner is to do injustice to its strength. It is not only true that the acquiescence of parliament has not been less indiscriminate; it is not only true that the house of commons have betrayed no symptoms of such ungovernable independence and impracticable virtue, as might seem to render its reform less necessary or less urgent; but it is incontrovertibly true, that your recent experience furnishes a more fantastic example of that ignominious servitude, from which reform can only rescue the commons, than any other that is to be found in our history. I allude to your Russian armament, which I do not bring forward that I may speak of its absurdity, because I will not stoop to wound a prostrate enemy, nor to insult a convicted criminal. I allude to it only as an example of the parade with which the dependence of the house of commons on the minister was exhibited to an indignant country. On former occasions it had been equally corrupt; on former occasions it had been equally absurd; but on no former occasion had it displayed such ostentatious and *versatile* dependence. The minister in one session determines on his armament. His obsequious majority register the edict; but the absurdity, the odium, and the unpopularity of the measure, shake the resolution of the cabinet. The voice of the people, despised by their pretended representatives, is listened to by the minister. The house of commons are at his nod ready to plunge their country into the most ruinous and unjust war; but the body of the people declare their sentiments, and the minister recedes. He commands his majority to retrace their steps, to condemn their former proceedings, and thus to declare most emphatically, that their interest is not the interest, that their voice is not the voice of the people. The obsequious majority obey without a murmur. '*Tibi summum rerum judicium dii dedere—nobis obsequii gloria relicta est.*'

"Nothing could more forcibly illustrate the mockery and nullity of what is strangely called the representation of the

people, than this splendid victory of public opinion. The minister yielded to that natural authority of public opinion, which is independent of forms of government, and which would have produced the same effect in most of the simple monarchies of civilized Europe. The cabinet of Versailles would have been compelled to exhibit a similar deference to the general sentiment before the fall of their despotism; and the people of England experienced no more aid from their supposed representatives, than if the house of commons had been in form and avowal, what it is in truth and substance, a chamber for registering ministerial edicts."

It was in the first session of the new parliament, that the cases of those individuals who had suffered by the suspension of the habeas corpus act were brought before the house of commons, with the vain hope on the part of their advocates, of arresting the indemnity bill in its progress, and visiting ministers with condign punishment; and never were grosser deceptions practised than were attempted by those who were endeavouring to mislead and infuriate the public mind on this occasion. The petitions of the miserable victims of arbitrary power, as they were pathetically termed, contained the most affecting details of cruelty and oppression which they had endured in dungeons and chains. But the case which was most relied on, and which has been dressed up a thousand times since to awaken and to keep alive the indignant sympathies of the country against the tyranny of the administration, was that of William Ogden, who represented himself as seventy-four years of age, with seventeen children—that he had been confined nine months—a manacle of thirty pounds' weight was put upon him, which dislocated his arm—that he cried bitterly for assistance, but that none came to him for

sixteen hours; during which time he suffered the most excruciating torture.

Now it turned out that not a syllable of this statement was true. The poor man had expressed his gratitude for the treatment which he had received during his confinement, and instead of his imprisonment having induced the melancholy disease of which the petition complained, it had been the means of restoring him to perfect health. Mr. Canning having exposed the abominable falsehoods which distinguished every instance of alleged cruelty, as practised by his majesty's ministers, exclaimed in a tone of very pardonable triumph, and without justly exposing himself to the slightest charge of inhumanity, "the case of the revered and ruptured Ogden may be a very fit one to be brought before the rupture society; but to require upon it the decision of parliament, is such a daring attempt upon its credulity, as will probably be never again attempted."

This harmless pleasantry, which so far from trifling with human suffering, was intended merely to expose its heartless and hypocritical assumption for a base and malignant purpose, was magnified into a detestable crime against humanity. It was denounced in an anonymous pamphlet, generally ascribed to Mr. Hobhouse, the member for Westminster, as a monstrous outrage upon the audience that it insulted; it was added, that the stupid alliteration, "the revered and ruptured," was one of the ill-tempered weapons coolly selected from his oratorical armoury; and the writer concludes his invectives and denunciations with the following threat: "If you ever accuse me of treason, throw me into prison—make your jailers

load me with chains—and then jest at my sufferings, I WILL PUT YOU TO DEATH."

To this anonymous attack Mr. Canning replied by the following letter to the author, who, however, was never discovered.

"Gloucester Lodge, April 10, 1818.

"SIR,—I received, early in the last week, the copy of your pamphlet which you (I take for granted) had the attention to send to me.

"Soon after, I was informed, on the authority of your publisher, that you had withdrawn the whole impression from him, with the view (as was supposed) of suppressing the publication.

"I since learn, however, that the pamphlet, though not sold, is circulated under blank covers.

"I learn this from (among others) the gentleman to whom the pamphlet has been industriously attributed, but who has voluntarily and absolutely denied to me that he has any knowledge of it, or of its author.

"To you, sir, whoever you may be, I address myself thus directly, for the purpose of expressing to you my opinion, that

"You are a liar and a slanderer, and want courage only to be an assassin.

"I have only to add, that no man knows of my writing to you; that I shall maintain the same reserve, se long as I have an expectation of hearing from you in your own name; and that I shall not give up that expectation, till to-morrow (Saturday) night.

"The same address that brought me your pamphlet will bring any letter safe to my hands.

"I am, sir,

"Your humble servant,

"GEORGE CANNING."

"For the Author of 'A Letter to the right hon. George Canning.'"

"(Mr. Ridgway is requested to forward this letter to its destination)."

We have intimated that suspicion of having written this phillipic rested on Mr. Hobhouse. Mr. Canning certainly lost no opportunity after its publication of insulting that gentleman. One night in a debate several years afterwards he had the rashness to allude to him and his colleague, as "the honourable baronet and his man." For these offences, Mr. Hobhouse on a subsequent occasion introduced in a speech on the question of reform, a very elaborate portrait of the right honourable gentleman, which more than revenged the previous insults.

We regret that the biographer of Sheridan and the author of Lalla Rookh should exasperate political animosity by the aid of his powerful genius. The satire he wrote on this occasion can never pass into oblivion; and it does afford us some consolation, that in presenting our readers with the poison, we can at the same time furnish them with the antidote,—the triumphant defence of Mr. Canning against the foul imputations so unjustly cast upon him.

LINES ON A LATE DISPLAY IN THE — OF —.

'*In jocis quoque perniciosus.*'

ÆLIUS LAMPRID. DE COMMODO.

"Is *this*, then, the eloquence fit for the ears
Of the statesmen of England—the manly, the wise?
Is *this*, then, the wit to awaken the cheers
Of the men on whose council the world hath its eyes?

"To make mirth, as the mummer's last brutal resource,
Out of torments, the deadliest man can sustain;
And to probe with a ridicule cruel and coarse,
As the knife of the Indian the vitals of pain.

"To lay bare every pang that, in ribaldry's dearth,
Even ribalds themselves would have cover'd in shade;
And to mock—gracious Heaven! with a mountebank's mirth,
The quivering of agony's nerve round the blade!

"Is this, then, the feeling,—is *this* the display,
Of that hall where the mighty of England once spoke;
Where a light from the spirit of Fox, like the ray
O'er the chains of the apostle* enfranchising broke.

"Where a SHERIDAN'S wit, (oh, the contrast to this!)
Though as wild as the creatures of air that in spring
Seem to lend a new charm to the flow'rets they kiss—
Never lighted on aught that could sully its wing.

"Where *once* there were men—had a MOMUS thus shook
His bells o'er the bed where a sufferer wasted—
Had struck down the heartless buffoon with a look,
And there left him, like something that lightning had blasted!

"But *is* this the eloquence Britons applaud?
Forbid it our nature—forbid it our fame;
On the mime who could utter—the slaves who could laud—
Such dishonouring trash, be the curse and the shame.

"No, still let the witling—if wit it can be,
That forsakes its own element, freedom and right,
And like fishes whose home, when alive, was the sea,
To *corruption* alone owes its pestilent light†.

"No still let the *punster*, the *parodist*, draw
From his out-of-date libels a pittance of fame,
While he helps to halloo the keen beagles of law,
At the fools who thus sanction'd dare venture the same.

"Let him plunder with those whom he ridiculed then,
Let him live by the crew who then waken'd his laughter,
Like creatures we read of, (less rank than such men),
Who befoul first their victim, and feed on it after.

* "'And a light shined in the prison —— and his chains fell off from his hands.'—*Acts* xii. 7.

† "The power of *rotten* fish to *shine* is well known.

" Yes, still let this trader—a trader as gross,
As the sleekest of them, whose 'sweet voices' he craves—
When *ethics* like theirs lie in profit and loss,
And whose trade (if it might) would like theirs be in *slaves*.

" Let him crouch to the rival he would have supplanted,
Since safer he finds it to crouch than betray;
Be his pledges belied, and his charges recanted,
The tribute that rival has bribed him to pay.

" All this let him do—even worse let him dare;
But never, just God, let the scoffer again
Make a jest of the ills that thy creatures must bear,
Lest thou wither the tongue that thus sports with their pain!"

This alleged wantonness of cruelty having been thrown in the face of Mr. Canning by one of the orators on the hustings, at Liverpool, an opportunity was thus afforded him of meeting and refuting the calumny—which he did in the following words:—

" From the enactments and debates of the last session, the honourable gentleman* has gone back still farther, to the discussions of a former session; and has taxed me, quite fairly I allow, and not uncivilly, though with all the vehemence with which it was natural that he should insist upon a topic which has been made, for some years, a subject of calumny against me. He has taxed me with certain expressions of mine, respecting the case of an individual taken up under the suspension of the habeas corpus. I will state to the honourable gentleman, for he seems to be altogether uninformed of it, the course of my argument on that occasion. I was exposing the frauds and falsehoods which had been palmed upon the house of commons in certain statements which had been made to them, and in certain petitions which had been presented from individuals, complaining of the treatment which they had endured under the suspension act. Of these falsehoods I selected three, as peculiarly gross and unjustifiable, and as, fortunately, susceptible of being

* Mr. Rushton.

brought to the test of the most decisive contradiction. The first, I recollect, related to a supposed spy, of the name, I think, of Dewhurst, who was represented to have been seen in a gig of Sir John Byng's, at some specific time and place; the object of the falsehood being to implicate the military commander, and through him the government, in the transactions imputed to this man. On further examination it turned out, that of the two elements of this falsehood neither existed; that there was no such man as Dewhurst, and that Sir John Byng had no gig. And I did humbly exhibit to the house of commons the direct and complete falsification of this story, as a specimen of the devices by which the conduct of government and its agents had been belied. The second of the instances which I selected is not, at this moment, immediately present to my recollection. But the third is that to which the gentleman has alluded; and the particulars of which were as follow:—A petition had been presented from a man whose name he has mentioned, stating that the irons with which he had been loaded, when taken into custody, had brought on that complaint under which he described himself as labouring. It was distinctly stated in that petition, not that, having such a complaint upon him, he was nevertheless taken up, (as the gentleman seems to imagine), but that the apprehension and restraint had *produced* on this poor man so terrible a calamity. The petition went on to describe the process of an operation, rendered necessary in this case, with all the disgusting detail of chirurgical particularity. It was quite obvious, that this description was intended to inflame the minds of all who should hear it, against the supposed authors of the calamity under which the poor man laboured, and, by necessary inference, of the sufferings incident to the treatment of it. I made inquiry into the matter of this petition, and communications were voluntarily made to me, from which I learnt, to my infinite astonishment, that, so far from its being the effect of his irons, and the immediate consequence, therefore, of his confinement, the man had been afflicted with his complaint for about twenty years; and that, so far from being aggravated by his imprisonment, he had, during that imprisonment, been cured at the public expense. Nay, I learnt, on what I believed, and still believe, to be incontestable authority, that,

in the first moment of his liberation, he had expressed his gratitude for the care which had been taken of him; and that it was not till some time afterwards, and upon mature reflection or advice, that he was induced to accuse government as the author of his long-standing disease. Could any thing be more gross than such an imposture? The calamity was itself grievous enough; but was it not shameful to ascribe to harsh and cruel treatment the result of natural infirmity? And if I indignantly exposed the baseness of such a fraud, is it to be inferred that I was, more than any man who heard me then, or who hears me now, insensible to human suffering? Those who draw such an inference are guilty of a gross calumny against me. If, in expressing a just indignation at such a fraud, any words escaped me which could, in any fair mind, be liable to a misconstruction, I am sorry for it; but I bate no jot of the indignation which I then expressed. I think now, as I thought then, that this case, in the shape in which it was brought before the house of commons, was a foul and wicked attempt to mislead and to inflame. To that statement I immoveably adhere."

The melancholy death of Sir Samuel Romilly having occasioned a vacancy in the representation for Westminster, while the election was going on, Mr. Canning took occasion, in the debate on the state of the nation, to make the following sarcastic allusions to the projected coalition between the whigs and Sir Francis Burdett.

"What do the whigs think of another Westminster election? It is true that the honourable baronet (Sir Francis Burdett) is this night with them; but it is only on the understanding that they will support his darling measure of parliamentary reform. After some hesitation, and a sort of whispering, the right honourable gentlemen acceded to the honourable baronet's condition, and a coalition has taken place. Suppose, now, that the new coalition ministry were formed; who, in point of talent, of rank, and of consideration in the country, was better fitted to be a leading member of the cabinet than the honourable baronet? Well, then, everybody knows that one of the

first questions which the honourable baronet would, when minister, bring forward, would be the great subject of parliamentary reform. What then would be the conduct of the whig members of the cabinet? Either they would come forward in a body to support the plan of their honourable colleague, and thereby flatly contradict their professions of a long series of years, or they would be a divided administration 'on the most important, the most comprehensive, the most vital question that ever agitated the country,' and thus be liable to the same reproach which they so unmercifully cast upon their unfortunate predecessors. An honourable gentleman has said, that if the ministers are popular in the house, the whigs are popular in the country. I should have thought popularity was the last topic that the whigs would have alluded to, as one of their pretensions to come into power. I do not conceive that ministers are particularly popular, nor myself more than the rest of my colleagues; but I have gone through the ordeal of a public election, without the accompaniment of *mud* and *grenadiers*. I have not been subjected to such *striking* proofs of favouritism as those idols of the people, the whigs; who, with laurels in their hats, and brickbats at their heels, bedaubed with ribands and rubbish, were forced to be rescued from their overpowering popularity, by a detachment of his majesty's horse guards. Suppose these mud-bespattered whigs were to come into office, instead of the present ministry, who, it is said, are so disliked throughout the country, where, after all, is the advantage worth contending for? Is it for the trifling difference between an *unpopular* and a *pelted* administration? The right honourable gentleman has confessed that this is a trial of strength; and I trust that the division of this night will show which party, in the opinion of the house, is the more likely to give stability to our internal quiet, permanency to our external glory, and produce general confidence throughout the country."

To the unconstitutional and alarming meetings for reform held at Manchester, and other large towns in the kingdom, we have already alluded. The outrages committed, and the dangers apprehended, led to those le-

gislative enactments which were treated with so much severity at the time, and which do not seem to be quite in accordance with the spirit of British freedom. Whether worthy of praise or censure, Mr. Canning has his full share in whatever they deserve; for they were measures which he supported with all his eloquence and influence.

On the 29th of the following January, 1820, his majesty King George the Third departed this life. The demise of the crown was the natural dissolution of parliament. Writs having been issued for a new one, in consequence of this event, Mr. Canning, on the 8th of March, was a fourth time nominated for Liverpool. His opponents on this occasion were a Dr. Crompton, and Mr. Leyland: the name of the latter gentleman was announced without his consent, and, it is believed, against his expressed determination. The hope, if any hope ever was indulged, of securing the doctor's election, was chimerical; but the faction, true to their character, determined on nominating him, in order to annoy, by a hopeless opposition, the friends of Mr. Canning. The invectives with which the popular orators accompanied their nomination were answered by Mr. Canning, in a clear and manly address, at the commencement of the poll. Dr. Crompton, and his friend Colonel Williams, by whom he was brought forward, were men altogether without pretensions. In Liverpool they had little or no influence; in political views they were ultra whigs, or, in the nomenclature of the day, radicals; they were destitute both of talents and tact, to maintain their ground at a popular election. Williams nominated Crompton for Liverpool; and Crompton

left the hustings in the midst of the election, to pay back his debt of gratitude, by going to Lancaster for the purpose of nominating his friend as a candidate to represent the county. On the hustings, at Liverpool, the radical colonel, in a vehement style of coarse invective, assailed Mr. Canning, and, to use the elegant phrase of Dr. Crompton, "flashed his crimes in his face." Mr. Canning, either alive to the ludicrous, or indulging some pleasantry of the imagination, happened to smile in the very middle of the worthy colonel's harangue. This harmless smile, which we allow was rather unseasonable, provoked the wrath of the irascible and patriotic doctor, who, addressing the mayor, Sir John Tobin, said:

"I consider the business in which I am about to engage as most serious. But, before I proceed to topics of more general interest, I must beg leave to contradict, and destroy as much as possible, a rumour which is spread abroad, that my opposition to the return of our late representatives is wholly vexatious. Fool, indeed, should I be to come forward, and put myself to every inconvenience, in a place where I live, for such a purpose; and still greater fool, to expose myself thereby to the severe censures of Mr. Canning, whose exquisite wit and humour can turn into ridicule every thing, both sacred and human. The impartial page of history informs us, that Nero fiddled while Rome burned. Mr. Canning smiled when Colonel Williams flashed his crimes in his face."

The mayor here interposed, and requested Dr. Crompton to guard as much as possible against personalities, assuring him, at the same time, of his protection whilst addressing the freemen.

"I thank you, Mr. Mayor," continued the doctor, "for the offer of your protection; but I fear not the face of man. I was observing, when I was interrupted, that while Rome *fiddled*, Nero *burned*.—[Laughter.] I meant to say, that while Rome

burned, Nero fiddled. But I cannot smile amidst the ruins of my country. When I look at what England was in the days of her glory, when there was plenty in every cottage of the realm, and look at what she now is, my heart sinks within me. When I see Englishmen oppressed in the manner they are, then my indignation is roused. I am indignant at seeing their hard earnings squandered away on useless placemen and pensioners—I did not mean to allude to Mr. Canning: he is welcome to his place; and,

> Had he been man's friend below,
> Canning had been a little god below.—[Laughter.]

When I see my fellow-creatures seized in the dead of the night, huddled into prisons, and afterwards discharged without a trial, then my heart misgives me, and I have a dreadful presage of the future."

This burst of eloquence was not lost upon Mr. Canning; and after wiping away all the foul imputations which the new candidate and his friends had attempted to fasten upon his character, he concluded, in his own inimitable style of satirical humour:

"My new antagonist, indeed, has touched upon a variety of general topics, into which I am not disposed to follow him; but he has addressed nothing personally to me, except some vague and, I do assure him, most exaggerated apprehensions of the treatment which he may expect at my hands. I have already assured you, sir, that on the present occasion I had no intention of saying any thing: but even my silence was not safe from the scrutinizing jealousy of the worthy doctor; for, it seems, he discerned something in my looks, while the honourable colonel was speaking, which alarmed him for the colonel's safety and his own. I smiled. If I did so, I assure him it was a smile of complacency, or, perhaps, of amusement, but in no degree of contumely or evil intention. The honourable doctor, indeed, has tempted me somewhat high with his references to ancient history,—with his allusion to the conflagration of Rome, and to

the emperor Nero's musical accomplishments. Of that allusion I have not, to this moment, made out the application; but if he intended (which seems the most probable solution of it) to compare the honourable colonel's eloquence to a conflagration, and his own to a musical instrument, I have only to hope, that if I offended by smiling at the colonel's fire, I may have made atonement by looking grave at the doctor's fiddling.

"My worthy antagonist will, I am sure, see how vain are all his apprehensions of any hostile aggression on my part. Attacked, indeed, I might possibly think it my duty to show him that raillery is a game which two can play at. But, even without the solemnity of the adjuration which he has addressed to me, as one in the habit of sparing nothing, either sacred or human, I assure him he has nothing to fear. I do not, indeed, know that there is any thing sacred about the doctor, but, as merely human, I shall be contented to abstain from him, so long as that abstinence is mutual. And I assure him most seriously, that if there is, as I trust there will not be, any want of courtesy and good-humour between us in the course of our competition, that deficiency shall not be first shown on my side."

Every thing that could vexatiously protract a contest which, from the first, was hopeless, was resorted to on this occasion. The friends of universal suffrage became consistently strenuous for the sifting of votes; and used all their effort to restrain the elective franchise, which at other times they contended was the birthright of every Englishman. Every voter was therefore put to his oath, in proof of his legal qualification, and of his freedom from the pollution of bribery. On this harassing, and totally unnecessary, procedure, Mr. Canning shrewdly remarked:

"Gentlemen, it has sometimes occurred to me to consider, whether this mode of conducting an election can have been devised with the view of exhibiting a practical specimen of the benefits which would be imposed upon the country by that wild parliamentary reform which our antagonists are in the habit of recommending.

"It will probably appear, if they persist at the rate at which they are now going, and at which they are, unfortunately, enabled to force us to go with them, that a contest hopeless from the beginning, and without the excuse, therefore, of expectations rationally entertained, and afterwards unexpectedly disappointed; without any of those vicissitudes of success which raise alternately the spirits of either side, and tempt to continual exertion, may be so carried on as to absorb the full time allowed by the law for exhausting all the resources of conflicting parties, in the most vehement struggle of balanced interests.

"Fifteen days of industry, fifteen days of business, fifteen days of that which, to a populous town, is invaluable,—the useful application of talents and of time, will have been lost to this community in a strife which, after all, is, from beginning to end, a mere sham fight, and which might have been ended in half an hour. Couple with this waste of fifteen days the project for making elections annual, and I would desire political arithmeticians to consider what would be the loss to this great commercial country, if such a system were established, and acted upon, as it is now against you, in every part of the united kingdom.

"Gentlemen, though in this town, more than in any other, the general opulence and prosperity of its inhabitants, the generosity of the wealthy, and the regular habits of the labouring classes, may make such a temporary suspension of business an evil of comparatively less fatal infliction, yet even to you it must be a matter of no light inconvenience, in its pressure and in its example. Let it be our satisfaction, that we have no share in producing this unnecessary and prodigal waste of time. And, if we must lose our time, let us keep our temper, in the assurance that the period cannot be far distant, when a system of vexation, at once so feeble and so mischievous, must break down."

On the fifth day of the poll, with becoming gravity of countenance, and pathos of tone, Mr. Canning announced the melancholy intelligence which will be found in the following paragraph.

"Gentlemen, we have lost our Crompton. He is not to be

found in Liverpool to-day; but as, when the sun sinks into the west, it is a consolation to those who lose the benefit of his light (if they have any spark of generosity in their nature) to know that it is rising upon another hemisphere; so we, who can no longer bask in the beams of Dr. Crompton's countenance, have a benevolent satisfaction at learning, that it rose, through the window of the morning coach, this day upon the people of Lancaster.

"Gentlemen, why Dr. Crompton has betaken himself to Lancaster, it is not for those who are not in his councils to conjecture. We are told, indeed, by his friends, that it is not for the purpose of proposing himself as a candidate there; that he is gone to propose some other gentleman. But, surely, Liverpool has a right to complain even of such temporary dereliction. He is no very warm suitor who can leave the lady whose hand he is soliciting for himself, to plead with another fair one the cause of a friend, however dear to him. We are assured, however, that he is to return on Thursday from this suit by proxy, in the hope that Liverpool will forgive his little infidelity, and take the dear deceiver to her arms and her favour again."

After having noticed the vehement professions of patriotism which had been poured forth by Colonel Williams, on this and on other occasions, and contrasted these professions with the ill-suppressed contempt of popular feelings into which disappointment had betrayed him, Mr. Canning observed:

"Gentlemen, the lesson which every sober man will draw from these, among other instances, is, that habitual protestations of extravagant, excessive popular feelings are to be received with a caution proportioned to their extravagance and excess. Distrust all such protestations. Be assured, that whatever is exaggerated in profession, whatever pretends to be peculiarly disinterested, or peculiarly devoted to the popular cause, is to be watched with peculiar caution; and that the chances are very great, that some opportunity will arise, when temper or policy will betray the worthlessness of such professions and pretences."

On the subject of voluntary associations for political purposes, Mr. Canning delivered sentiments worthy of his character. The love of freedom breaks through his tory prejudices, and he admits the principle, that associations are constitutional, that they may be useful, and that they are sometimes necessary. The speech from whence the following extract is taken was addressed to the Liverpool Canning Club, on the 15th of March.

"Gentlemen, the times when I first came amongst you were times portentous and awful, and big with the fate, not only of England, but of the world. But the dangers and the difficulties of those times created in us an animating spirit, which nerved our arms and steeled our hearts to oppose and overcome them. The dangers and the difficulties of the present times are of a different character; and, whilst they threaten the existence of all that is dear to us, the struggle which we have to sustain is one in which there is not the same wholesome animation, because it is with antagonists who dare not face the day; and the victory, when achieved, is less void of exultation, because it is over those who ought never to have been other than our friends.

"But, gentlemen, it is against the same spirit, though exhibited in different forms, though wielding different weapons,—it is against the same spirit that we contended abroad for our own safety and that of Europe, and are contending now for our political existence at home: a spirit then as now adverse to rational freedom; a spirit then as now hostile to national tranquillity; a spirit then as now seeking to subvert society itself, by separating the elements of which it is composed, and setting them in array against each other; and to undermine the foundation of man's happiness in this world, by destroying his hopes of an hereafter.

"Were I to have my choice, I confess I would rather have to contend with this spirit embodied and armed—I would rather cross the sea to combat it, whether on the plains of the Peninsula, or on the field of Waterloo, than have to guard against it here, in the various disguises of affected philanthropy and fana-

tical reform in which it is to be found every day at our elbows and by our firesides.

"There is, however, one consolation to be derived from the extreme degree of malignity to which this spirit has been lately exasperated. In the ordinary agitations and contests which disturb society, there is seldom any line which so distinctly marks the boundaries of opposite opinions and interests as to make it quite impossible that stragglers from either class should be confounded with the other. In ordinary divisions, something must be allowed for hesitation and timidity, something for the possibility of mistake or delusion; and neutrality is the refuge of those who have not the leisure to examine, or the firmness to decide. But things are now brought so plainly home to every man's understanding, that he who runs may read; and he who listens to the doctrines with which the constitution of the country is assailed; with which the majesty of the throne is insulted; by which the rights of all orders of the people are proposed to be sacrificed to an overwhelming despotism and a fierce and levelling anarchy;—he who can hear these things, and doubt whether there be a design among those who speak such language to pull down all authority, to subvert all institutions, and to confound the fair degrees by which a people are a nation, must either be altogether reckless of all that is passing around him, or indifferent about the preservation of blessings which he is unworthy to enjoy.

"These are times which admit not of neutrality. When the most sacred institutions of the country are assailed with more than foreign enmity, he who is not for them is against them.

"It has sometimes been doubted, whether associations of the sort which I have now the honour of addressing be, or be not, useful and praiseworthy. But of this there can be no doubt, that where bad men combine, the good must associate, if they mean to stand to their defence on equal terms.

"What may be the bond of association signifies little, provided only, that the principle of union be the defence of all that is sound in morality, of all that is solid in principle, of all that is a source of glory to us as Englishmen, and of hope as human kind. That such an association should be bound together by the name of any particular individual, must be to the individual

whose name is so honoured matter of humility as well as of pride:—of humility, because he cannot but compare the greatness of the thing signified with the unworthiness of the symbol; of pride, that his name, all unworthy as it may be, should, by its association with such principles and with such an institution, be likely to survive his own existence.

"Gentlemen, I understand you have, within these few days, added to your number another person bearing my name, a person so dear to myself, that his adoption into your society has been, in the highest degree, grateful to my feelings. Upon being shown the book in which my son's name has been enrolled, I perceive that, either from inadvertence or timidity, he has suppressed a part of his denomination. His name is William *Pitt* Canning. The illustrious person whose name he bears was his godfather. Gentlemen, the political principles which I inherit from the godfather, I shall endeavour to instil into my son, and through him I hope to transmit them to my latest posterity."

His luminous and excellent speech on popular representation, delivered soon after the last, at the Backbone Club, we cannot introduce. But we earnestly recommend the entire volume where it is to be found to the attention of our readers.

From the speech, on his being chaired on the 16th of March, our love of wit, truth, and eloquence, compels us to make the following extract.

"Gentlemen, the elections in which I have had the honour to be chosen by you are of two distinct characters. In the first and in the third of them, you had real and vigorous combats to sustain; you had to repel the attempt to impose upon you representatives, the choice of whom would have inferred a change in political sentiments, and an abandonment of constitutional principles. In that of 1816, and in that of the present day, your object has been not so much to repel any such serious danger, as to maintain, with a high hand, the ascendancy which you already enjoyed.

"On the present occasion, indeed, the presumption of your

antagonists appears to have been equalled only by the weakness with which they came into the field: and in proportion as their means of success were diminished, they seem to have aimed at the achievement of greater objects. Whether it was that they imagined their principles of reform to have made greater progress in Liverpool than in any other part of the country, I cannot say. But it was surely no small presumption, especially on the part of those who are continually declaiming against the undue interference of powerful individuals, and against the servile surrender of the freedom of election;—it was no small presumption, I say, for any such party to think, that they might, with one hand, grasp the representation of Liverpool, and, with the other, indicate the representative of the county.

"Gentlemen, the process by which this twofold operation was to be brought about was one of a curious kind. It reminds me of what I have read, in some of the political pamphlets of, I believe, the reign of Queen Anne, of an empiric who, not liking to sound his own praises, but wishing to have them sounded, hit upon a notable expedient of obtaining the benefit, without incurring the reproach, of such a proclamation. A youth preceded him in the crowd, crying, with a loud voice, 'My father cures all sorts of diseases.' The doctor marched behind him, with a sedate and solemn step, simply declaring, 'The youth says true.' Now, Colonel Williams appears to have acted, on our hustings, the part of the ingenuous youth, when he proposed Dr. Crompton to you as a healer of all the diseases of the political constitution. Dr. Crompton followed, with a modest and measured pace, not singing his own praises, but admitting the truth of the praises which had been sung.

"But one good turn deserves another; and the operation in hand was, as I have described it, twofold. The peculiar inducement held out to you to receive Dr. Crompton as your representative was, that he was in possession of some great specific, which would enable him to restore peace to the community, and to heal the differences by which the nation is unfortunately distracted. What this panacea was we could never extract from the doctor on the hustings. Thus much only we could learn, that it was some cabalistic name which he was to pronounce on the hustings at Lancaster, which would still the popular storm,

and diffuse liberty and contentment throughout the country. Well, when the time arrived, and Dr. Crompton departed for Lancaster, we found, that the scene, exhibited a few days before at Liverpool, was to be acted over again at the county town, with a change only in the order of the *dramatis personæ*. Dr. Crompton was now to be the herald of the praises of his proposer; and the name of Williams, pronounced in the shire-hall, was the charm by which the county was to be lulled into peace and exalted into glory. Colonel Williams's election for the county was the prescription by which all diseases were to be healed. Pity that the county should reject the dose! but natural enough that, after that rejection, you should, upon his return to you, dismiss the doctor!

"Gentlemen, this, though a ludicrous proceeding enough, is, after all, but a fair specimen of that easy confidence with which those who preach the doctrines of indefinite reform already look on their triumph as secure, and count on the people of England as their prey. In a town containing thousands of freemen and tens of thousands of inhabitants; in a county containing tens of thousands of freeholders and hundreds of thousands of inhabitants,—is it not almost incredible to any person, not a radical reformer, that two men (however individually respectable), without either that station, that property, or that influence, natural or acquired, which could give authority to their recommendation among a vestry of their fellow-citizens, should have cherished the preposterous design of reciprocally complimentng each other into the representation of the county and of the town?

"I have said, gentlemen, this was only a specimen, and no unfair one, of the confidence with which, if not now, some short four months ago, persons professing principles such as are professed by those two worthy brother candidates, each, in his turn, the other's nominator and nominee, reckoned on this fair land of England as at their feet, and almost in their clutches. Nor did they reason far amiss; for, depend upon it, if ever their schemes of unlimited suffrage and annual elections should find that favour in the eyes of the nation, which the misled and inflamed judgment of a part—a small part, I trust—of the nation appeared ready to bestow upon them, the progress would not be long, through the storms of popular commotion, to that

state of things to which popular commotions always tend, and in which they are finally merged and extinguished—the arbitrary dictatorship of unfit and overweening individuals. These sagacious enthusiasts may, in their sanguineness, have a little anticipated the time,—they may have a little shortened the course by which such results would be arrived at from such beginnings: but let the day come when a change in the constitution of parliament, upon the principles of the reformers, shall be effected, and the day will not be far off when England may resign—I will not say to a Williams or a Crompton, but to some name quite as fitted to the station—the supreme direction of her destinies. This, gentlemen, is not the language of theory; it is the doctrine of experience. The history of your own country is sufficient to teach it to you, without looking abroad for more pregnant and still more terrible examples."

At the public dinner, in honour of his re-election, in the music hall, on Saturday, March 18th, the right honourable gentleman put forth all his strength. The six acts, the restrictions which had put down the riots of Manchester, and prevented others which threatened places of similar magnitude, but which had exposed their authors to every species of misrepresentation and abuse, were this evening brought to a constitutional test. This part of the speech we shall give entire; the other half, which relates to parliamentary reform, as it is but a reiteration of sentiments uttered on former occasions, and which are to be found in our pages, we shall omit.

"Gentlemen, short as the interval is since I last met you in this place on a similar occasion, the events which have filled up that interval have not been unimportant. The great moral disease which we then talked of as gaining ground on the community has, since that period, arrived at its most extravagant height; and, since that period also, remedies have been applied to it, if not of permanent cure, at least of temporary mitigation.

"Gentlemen, with respect to those remedies,—I mean with respect to the transactions of the last short session of parliament

previous to the dissolution, I feel that it is my duty, as your representative, to render to you some account of the part which I took in that assembly to which you sent me; I feel it my duty also as a member of the government by which those measures were advised. Upon occasions of such trying exigency as those which we have lately experienced, I hold it to be of the very essence of our free and popular constitution, that an unreserved interchange of sentiment should take place between the representative and his constituents; and if it accidentally happens, that he who addresses you as your representative stands also in the situation of a responsible adviser of the crown, I recognize in that more rare occurrence a not less striking nor less valuable peculiarity of that constitution under which we have the happiness to live,—by which a minister of the crown is brought into contact with the great body of the community; and the service of the king is shown to be a part of the service of the people.

"Gentlemen, it has been one advantage of the transactions of the last session of parliament, that while they were addressed to meet the evils which had grown out of charges heaped upon the house of commons, they have also, in a great measure, falsified the charges themselves.

"I would appeal to the recollection of every man who now hears me,—of any, the most careless estimator of public sentiment, or the most indifferent spectator of public events, whether any country, in any two epochs, however distant, of its history, ever presented such a contrast with itself as this country in November, 1819, and this country in February, 1820? What was the situation of the country in November, 1819? Do I exaggerate when I say, that there was not a man of property who did not tremble for his possessions?—that there was not a man of retired and peaceable habits who did not tremble for the tranquillity and security of his home?—that there was not a man of orderly and religious principles who did not fear that those principles were about to be cut from under the feet of succeeding generations? Was there any man who did not apprehend the crown to be in danger? Was there any man, attached to the other branches of the constitution, who did not contemplate with anxiety and dismay the rapid and, apparently, irresistible diffusion of doctrines hostile to the very existence of

parliament as at present constituted, and calculated to excite, not hatred and contempt merely, but open and audacious force, especially against the house of commons?—What is, in these respects, the situation of the country now? Is there a man of property who does not feel the tenure by which he holds his possessions to have been strengthened? Is there a man of peace who does not feel his domestic tranquillity to have been secured? Is there a man of moral and religious principles who does not look forward with better hope to see his children educated in those principles?—who does not hail, with renewed confidence, the revival and re-establishment of that moral and religious sense which had been attempted to be obliterated from the hearts of mankind?

"Well, gentlemen, and what has intervened between the two periods? A calling of that degraded parliament; a meeting of that scoffed-at and derided house of commons; a concurrence of those three branches of an imperfect constitution, not one of which, if we are to believe the radical reformers, lived in the hearts, or swayed the feelings, or commanded the respect of the nation; but which, despised as they were while in a state of separation and inaction, did, by a co-operation of four short weeks, restore order, confidence, a reverence for the laws, and a just sense of their own legitimate authority.

"Another event, indeed, has intervened, in itself of a most painful nature, but powerful in aiding and confirming the impressions which the assembling and the proceedings of parliament were calculated to produce. I mean the loss which the nation has sustained by the death of a sovereign, with whose person all that is venerable in monarchy has been identified in the eyes of successive generations of his subjects; a sovereign whose goodness, whose years, whose sorrows and sufferings, must have softened the hearts of the most ferocious enemies of kingly power; whose active virtues, and the memory of whose virtues, when it pleased Divine Providence that they should be active no more, have been the guide and guardian of his people through many a weary and many a stormy pilgrimage; scarce less a guide, and quite as much a guardian, in the cloud of his evening darkness, as in the brightness of his meridian day.

"That such a loss, and the recollections and reflections natu-

rally arising from it, must have had a tendency to revive and refresh the attachment to monarchy, and to root that attachment deeper in the hearts of the people, might easily be shown by reasoning; but a feeling truer than all reasoning anticipates the result, and renders the process of argument unnecessary. So far, therefore, has this great calamity brought with it its own compensation, and conspired to the restoration of peace throughout the country with the measures adopted by parliament.

"And, gentlemen, what was the character of those measures? The best eulogy of them I take to be this: it may be said of them, as has been said of some of the most consummate productions of literary art, that, though no man beforehand had exactly anticipated the scope and the details of them, no man, when they were laid before him, did not feel that they were precisely such as he would himself have suggested. So faithfully adapted to the case which they were framed to meet, so correctly adjusted to the degree and nature of the mischief they were intended to control, that, while we all feel that they have done their work, I think none will say there has been anything in them of excess or supererogation.

"We were loudly assured by the reformers, that the test, throughout the country, by which those who were ambitious of seats in the new parliament would be tried was to be—whether they had supported those measures. I have inquired, with as much diligence as was compatible with my duties here, after the proceedings of other elections; and I protest I know no place yet, besides the hustings of Westminster and Southwark, at which that menaced test has been put to any candidates. To me, indeed, it was not put as a test, but objected as a charge. You know how that charge was answered: and the result is to me a majority of 1,300 out of 2,000 voters upon the poll.

"But, gentlemen, though this question has not, as was threatened, been the watchword of popular elections, every other effort has, nevertheless, been industriously employed to persuade the people, that their liberties have been essentially abridged by the regulation of popular meetings. Against that one of the measures passed by parliament it is that the attacks of the radical reformers have been particularly directed. Gentlemen, the first answer to this averment is, that the act leaves untouched all the

constitutional modes of assembly which have been known to the nation since it became free. We are fond of dating our freedom from the revolution. I should be glad to know, in what period since the revolution, (up to a very late period, indeed, which I will specify,)—in what period of those reigns growing out of the revolution—I mean, of the first reigns of the house of Brunswick,—did it enter into the head of man, that such meetings could be holden, or that the legislature would tolerate the holding of such meetings, as disgraced this kingdom for some months previous to the last session of parliament? When, therefore, it is asserted, that such meetings were never before suppressed, the simple answer is, they were never before systematically attempted to be holden.

"I verily believe, the first meeting of the kind that was ever attempted and tolerated (I know of none anterior to it) was that called by Lord George Gordon, in St. George's Fields, in the year 1780, which led to the demolition of chapels and dwelling-houses, the breaking of prisons, and the conflagration of London. Was England never free till 1780? Did British liberty spring to light from the ashes of the metropolis? What! was there no freedom in the reign of George the Second? None in that of George the First? None in the reign of Queen Anne, or of King William? Beyond the revolution I will not go. But I have always heard, that British liberty was established long before the commencement of the late reign; nay, that in the late reign (according to popular politicians) it rather sunk and retrograded: and yet never till that reign was such an abuse of popular meetings dreamt of, much less erected into a right, not to be questioned by magistrates, and not to be controlled by parliament.

"Do I deny, then, the general right of the people to meet, to petition, or to deliberate upon their grievances? God forbid! But social right is not a simple, abstract, positive, unqualified term. Rights are, in the same individual, to be compared with his duties; and rights in one person are to be balanced with the rights of others. Let us take this right of meeting in its most extended construction and most absolute sense. The persons who called the meeting at Manchester tell you, that they had a right to collect together countless multitudes to discuss the

question of parliamentary reform: to collect them when they would and where they would, without consent of magistrates, or concurrence of inhabitants, or reference to the comfort or convenience of the neighbourhood. May not the peaceable, the industrious inhabitant of Manchester say, on the other hand, 'I have a right to quiet in my house; I have a right to carry on my manufactory, on which, not my existence only and that of my children, but that of my workmen and their numerous families depends. I have a right to be protected in the exercise of this my lawful calling. I have a right to be protected, not against violence and plunder only, against fire and sword, but against the terror of these calamities, and against the risk of these inflictions; against the intimidation or seduction of my workmen; or against the distraction of that attention and the interruption of that industry, without which neither they nor I can gain our livelihood. I call upon the laws to afford me that protection; and, if the laws in this country cannot afford it, depend upon it, I and my manufactures must emigrate to some country where they can.' Here is a conflict of rights, between which what is the decision? Which of the two claims is to give way? Can any reasonable being doubt? Can any honest man hesitate? Let private justice or public expediency decide, and can the decision by possibility be other, than that the peaceable and industrious shall be protected—the turbulent and mischievous put down?

"But what similarity is there between tumults such as these and an orderly meeting, recognised by the law for all legitimate purposes of discussion or petition? God forbid, that there should not be modes of assembly by which every class of this great nation may be brought together to deliberate on any matters connected with their interest and their freedom. It is, however, an inversion of the natural order of things, it is a disturbance of the settled course of society, to represent discussion as every thing, and the ordinary occupations of life as nothing. To protect the peaceable in their ordinary occupations is as much the province of the laws, as to provide opportunities of discussion for every purpose to which it is necessary and properly applicable. The laws do both: but it is no part of the contrivance of the laws, that immense multitudes should wan-

tonly be brought together, month after month, and day after day, in places where the very bringing together of a multitude is of itself the source of terror and of danger.

"It is no part of the provision of the laws, nor is it in the spirit of them, that such multitudes should be brought together at the will of unauthorized and irresponsible individuals, changing the scene of meeting as may suit their caprice or convenience, and fixing it where they have neither property, nor domicile, nor connexion. The spirit of the law goes directly the other way. It is, if I may so express myself, eminently a spirit of corporation. Counties, parishes, townships, guilds, professions, trades, and callings form so many local and political subdivisions, into which the people of England are distributed by the law: and the pervading principle of the whole is that of vicinage or neighbourhood; by which each man is held to act under the view of his neighbours; to lend his aid to them, to borrow theirs; to share their councils, their duties, and their burdens; and to bear with them his share of responsibility for the acts of any of the members of the community of which he forms a part.

"Observe, I am not speaking here of the reviled and discredited statute law only, but of that venerable common law to which our reformers are so fond of appealing on all occasions, against the statute law by which it is modified, explained, or enforced. Guided by the spirit of the one, no less than by the letter of the other, what man is there in this country who cannot point to the portion of society to which he belongs? If injury is sustained, upon whom is the injured person expressly entitled to come for redress? Upon the hundred, or the division in which he has sustained the injury. On what principle? On the principle, that as the individual is amenable to the division of the community to which he specially belongs, so neighbours are answerable for each other. Just laws, to be sure, and admirable equity, if a stranger is to collect a mob which is to set half Manchester on fire; and the burnt half is to come upon the other half for indemnity, while the stranger goes off, unquestioned, to excite the like tumult and produce the like danger elsewhere!

"That such was the nature, such the tendency, nay, that

such, in all human probability, might have been the result of meetings like that of the 16th of August, who can deny? Who that weighs all the particulars of that day, comparing them with the rumours and the threats that preceded it, will dispute that such might have been the result of that very meeting, if that meeting, so very legally assembled, had not, by the happy decision of the magistrates, been so very illegally dispersed?

"It is, therefore, not in consonance, but in contradiction to the spirit of the law, that such meetings have been holden. The law prescribes a corporate character. The callers of these meetings have always studiously avoided it. No summons of freeholders —none of freemen—none of the inhabitants of particular places or parishes—no acknowledgment of local or political classification. Just so at the beginning of the French revolution: the first work of the reformers was to loosen every established political relation, every legal holding of man to man; to destroy every corporation, to dissolve every subsisting class of society, and to reduce the nation into individuals, in order, afterwards, to congregate them into mobs.

"Let no person, therefore, run away with the notion, that these things were done without design. To bring together the inhabitants of a particular division, or men sharing a common franchise, is to bring together an assembly, of which the component parts act with some respect and awe of each other. Ancient habits, which the reformers would call prejudices; preconceived attachments, which they would call corruption; that mutual respect which makes the eye of a neighbour a security for each man's good conduct, but which the reformers would stigmatize as a confederacy among the few for dominion over their fellows:—all these things make men difficult to be moved, on the sudden, to any extravagant and violent enterprise. But bring together a multitude of individuals, having no permanent relation to each other,—no common tie, but what arises from their concurrence as members of that meeting, a tie dissolved as soon as the meeting is at an end; in such an aggregation of individuals there is no such mutual respect, no such check upon the proceedings of each man from the awe of his neighbour's disapprobation; and, if ever a multitudinous assembly can be

wrought up to purposes of mischief, it will be an assembly so composed.

"How monstrous is it to confound such meetings with the genuine and recognised modes of collecting the sense of the English people! Was it by meetings such as these that the revolution was brought about, that grand event, to which our antagonists are so fond of referring? Was it by meetings in St. George's Fields? in Spafields? in Smithfield? Was it by untold multitudes collected in a village in the north? No! It was by the meeting of corporations, in their corporate capacity; by the assembly of recognised bodies of the state; by the interchange of opinions among portions of the community known to each other, and capable of estimating each other's views and characters. Do we want a more striking mode of remedying grievances than this? Do we require a more animating example? And did it remain for the reformers of the present day to strike out the course by which alone Great Britain could make and keep herself free?

"Gentlemen, all power is, or ought to be, accompanied by responsibility. Tyranny is irresponsible power. This definition is equally true, whether the power be lodged in one or many; whether in a despot, exempted by the form of government from the control of law; or in a mob, whose numbers put them beyond the reach of law. Idle, therefore, and absurd, to talk of freedom where a mob domineers! Idle, therefore, and absurd, to talk of liberty, when you hold your property, perhaps your life, not indeed at the nod of a despot, but at the will of an inflamed, an infuriated populace! If therefore, during the reign of terror at Manchester or at Spafields, there were persons in this country who had a right to complain of tyranny, it was they who loved the constitution, who loved the monarchy, but who dared not utter their opinions or their wishes until their houses were barricaded, and their children sent to a place of safety. That was tyranny! and, so far as the mobs were under the control of a leader, that was despotism! It was against that tyranny, it was against that despotism, that parliament at length raised its arm.

"All power, I say, is vicious that is not accompanied by pro-

portionate responsibility. Personal responsibility prevents the abuse of individual power: responsibility of character is the security against the abuse of collective power, when exercised by bodies of men whose existence is permanent and defined. But strip such bodies of these qualities, you degrade them into multitudes, and then what security have you against any thing that they may do or resolve, knowing that, from the moment at which the meeting is at an end, there is no human being responsible for their proceedings? The meeting at Manchester, the meeting at Birmingham, the meeting at Spafields, or Smithfield, what pledge could they give to the nation of the soundness or sincerity of their designs? The local character of Manchester, the local character of Birmingham was not pledged to any of the proceedings to which their names were appended. A certain number of ambulatory tribunes of the people, self-elected to that high function, assumed the name and authority of whatever place they thought proper to select for a place of meeting; their rostrum was pitched, sometimes here, sometimes there, according to the fancy of the mob, or the patience of the magistrates; but the proposition and the proposer were in all places nearly alike; and when, by a sort of political ventriloquism, the same voice had been made to issue from half a dozen different corners of the country, it was impudently assumed to be a concord of sweet sounds, composing the united voice of the people of England!

"Now, gentlemen, let us estimate the mighty mischief that has been done to liberty by putting down meetings such as I have described. Let us ask, what lawful authority has been curtailed; let us ask, what respectable community has been defrauded of its franchise; let us ask, what municipal institutions have been violated by a law which fixes the migratory complaint to the spot whence it professes to originate, and desires to hear of the grievance from those by whom that grievance is felt;—which leaves to Manchester, as Manchester, to Birmingham, as Birmingham, to London, as London, all the free scope of utterance which they have at any time enjoyed for making known their wants, their feelings, their wishes, their remonstrances;—which leaves to each of these divisions its separate

authority,—to the union of all or of many of them, the aggregate authority of such a consent and co-operation; but which denies to an itinerant hawker of grievances the power of stamping their names upon his wares; of pretending, because he may raise an outcry *at* Manchester or *at* Birmingham, that he therefore speaks the sense of the town which he disquiets and endangers; or, still more preposterously, that because he has disquieted and endangered half a dozen neighbourhoods in their turn, he is, therefore, the organ of them all, and, through them, of the whole British people.

"Such are the stupid fallacies which the law of the last session has extinguished! and such are the object and effect of the measures which British liberty is not to survive!"

On the last day of this month, which marked an era for ever memorable in the history of his fame, Mr. Canning sustained a severe domestic affliction. Such an event always proves severe, even to individuals not remarkable for their sensibility; but in his affectionate and paternal heart it excited the most poignant grief. This was the death of his eldest son, George Charles Canning, in the nineteenth year of his age. On the tomb of this beloved child Mr. Canning recorded both his anguish and his consolation, in the beautiful lines which have been so often quoted, which breathe the tender spirit of bereaved affection, soothed by the hallowed influence of true religion; and yet with this unequivocal memorial of piety before their eyes, certain miscreants, the very refuse of the public press, and whose insignificance alone protects them from universal execration, have dared to impute *atheism* to the illustrious dead. No charge was ever more unfounded. The epitaph speaks for itself.

EPITAPH ON HIS SON.

George Charles Canning, eldest son of the Right Honourable George Canning, and Joan Scott, his wife; born April 25, 1801—*died March* 31, 1820.

Though short thy span, God's unimpeach'd decrees,
Which made that shorten'd span one long disease,
Yet, merciful in chastening, gave thee scope
For mild, redeeming virtues, faith and hope;
Meek resignation; pious charity:
And, since this world was not the world for thee,
Far from thy path removed, with partial care,
Strife, glory, gain, and pleasure's flowery snare,
Bade earth's temptations pass thee harmless by,
And fix'd on heaven thine unreverted eye!

Oh! mark'd from birth, and nurtured for the skies!
In youth, with more than learning's wisdom, wise!
As sainted martyrs, patient to endure!
Simple as unwean'd infancy, and pure!
Pure from all stain (save that of human clay,
Which Christ's atoning blood hath wash'd away!)
By mortal sufferings now no more oppress'd,
Mount, sinless spirit, to thy destined rest!
While I, reversed our nature's kindlier doom,
Pour forth a father's sorrows on thy tomb.

As a proof that the devout resignation exhibited in this sacred record of his sentiments and feelings arose from an habitual attention to the offices of religion, both public and domestic, we have the testimony of a letter from a branch of Mr. Canning's family, written shortly after his lamented decease. It is from one of Mr. Canning's surviving relatives, and was published through the medium of one of the newspapers.

"You know, as well as I do (and we are told that we are to judge of the tree by its fruits), that there could hardly have

been a man existing more correctly moral than George Canning—correct from principle, and not from apathy. As a husband, a father, a master, his conduct was irreproachable; and as a son it was not only irreproachable, but such, that I firmly believe, if all the circumstances of it be ever known, the pages which relate it will be considered as the brightest in his whole history. As a young man, I should say, that although not always as attentive as he ought to have been, he was far more attentive to his religious duties than most young men; and from the time of his marriage, as I understand, he was as regular in his attendance at church as his avocations would allow; and had constantly service at home, whenever his family were prevented from attending the public service. And this is the man whom his enemies would stigmatise as devoid of religion! It only shows how deadly is the rancour of party spirit, and how true it is that there is no one whom a man hates so intensely as the person whom he has injured. Both the good and the bad qualities of this highly-gifted man are now before the world, and I have no doubt, that in spite of the worst efforts of his ingenious enemies, he has left those behind him who will do justice to his character, and who, in defiance of his faults—faults that will appear like nothing when compared to his virtues—will represent him as he really was—amiable in his own family and among his friends, and, as a public man, high-spirited, candid, disinterested, indefatigable in serving his country, and seeking the reward of those services, not in the wealth or rank they might procure, but in their own renown, and in the good they might do to mankind.

"I am yours affectionately,

"WILLIAM CANNING."

The arrival of the queen, the unfortunate Caroline of Brunswick, in the June of this year, from her sojourn in Italy, whither she had retired, when Princess of Wales, by the advice of Mr. Canning, to avoid the merciless persecution of her enemies, produced the greatest consternation in the cabinet. Never were men placed by any event in circumstances of more perplexing difficulty. Most of them, at the command

of the late king, their revered and beloved master, had assisted at what was called the "delicate investigation." Mr. Canning, especially, was the avowed friend of the illustrious accused. He had been her frequent and her favoured guest, and, from intimate acquaintance, he had fearlessly proclaimed her "the life, grace, and ornament of every society she chose to ennoble with her presence." She was protected by the tories in power up to the moment of her leaving the country. Mr. Perceval had written "The Book" to establish her innocence *; and, while an exile in a foreign land, she enjoyed the high consolation of knowing that the ministers of her sovereign were devoted to her cause, as an injured princess doubly related to the throne. The demise of her royal father and uncle, George the Third, soon put these visions to flight. This event was the signal for treating her with a neglect which her presumed guilt could not excuse, and which, under any circumstances, would have been as impolitic as it was obviously unjust. We are not about to enter into any defence of the unhappy queen, and we leave her case to the calm decision of impartial history: it is only of Mr. Canning's conduct to this illustrious personage that we have to speak; and we hesitate not to say, that it fills us with unmingled regret. We are far from thinking that he was bound to espouse her cause, and to

* The writer of these Memoirs perused this work on the very day the whole edition was returned, under seal, to the office of its right honourable and learned author; and his opinion at the time was, that it ought not to have been written, at least with the most distant view to publication. It, however, did establish the substantial innocence of her royal highness.

stand by her as an advocate in this time of peril; and yet, as she had left the country by his advice, against the urgent remonstrances of her more enlightened friends, who trembled for her reputation if committed to foreign, and especially to Italian, hands, but who felt that she would have been secure from all the injurious effects of calumny had she remained in England, Mr. Canning certainly owed it to his own consistency, and to the character of his illustrious friend, not to assist her accusers, to avoid throwing any imputation upon her honour, and, if he acted at all, to have protected the weak against the powerful, till her guilt should have been clearly established. We think Mr. Canning ought to have resigned his seat in the cabinet the moment he discovered that any thing was meditated there against the honour and the life of her whom he could only remember with gratitude, and hail with admiration, as the "life, grace, and ornament of society." Was it for him to defend the men when he utterly disapproved of their measures; and to fight their battles, in their preliminary and unconstitutional efforts to ruin the first subject in the kingdom, when he felt determined to abandon them as soon as their efforts were successful? How Mr. Canning could deliver the following sentences in the house, when he must have known that, up to the moment of her majesty's coming to England, the ministers had done absolutely nothing to divert her from her purpose, but every thing to exasperate and provoke her to take this final and fatal step, we are at a loss to understand. Mr. Canning followed Mr. Brougham, who vehemently opposed the motion, that the papers presented by Lord Castlereagh to the house should be referred

to a select committee. He rose with evident agitation, and said:

"I never rose to deliver my sentiments on a subject of so much delicacy and interest as that now before the house. I never felt myself called on to discharge a duty so painful as the present, or which demanded from every liberal mind a greater portion of calmness, of patience, and of attention, than the question under consideration requires. The occasion out of which it arose, and the circumstances that are connected with it, are of a nature as novel as they are delicate. I listened with attention to what the learned gentleman (Mr. Brougham) stated, with respect to the mischief that might result from the inquiry into which we are forced, and I heartily concur in the sentiments he uttered. I do not think it is possible to turn such an investigation to the advantage of the country, or of the parties whom it concerns. The dearest interests of the country, and the character of the most illustrious personages in it, are involved in the proceeding. But, with respect to all that part of the learned gentleman's speech, in which he imputes to ministers of the crown any responsibility that may attach to this transaction, I hold it to be of no weight whatsoever. And, in taking up the challenge which the learned gentleman threw out last night, I am prepared to say, not only that ministers do not come to the country; not only that they do not come to parliament; not only that they deprecate it with all their hearts; but that they have interposed every possible expedient to prevent a calamity, which they would, with all their power and all their means, have averted. I know that it is a common remark with many gentlemen, that ministers are fond of their places, and that out of their adherence to them the present communication from the crown has arisen; but the honourable and learned gentleman is well aware that this observation is not true. If the present had been a case where some preponderating influence had been exerted, in order to have the charge brought forward, and if the bringing of it forward could have been at all checked by the retirement of such an insignificant individual as myself from public life, no man would have been more ready than myself to have tendered the resignation of all my appointments.

But this is by no means the case. Ministers have, to the very last moment, entertained hopes of being able to bring the negociation with her majesty to a favourable conclusion; those hopes have unfortunately been frustrated, and the cup of expectation dashed from their lips, at the very moment when they were ready to enjoy it. One course only was then left for them to adopt, and that was the course which they have adopted. Such are the observations which press themselves upon my notice; some of them are forced from me by my own personal feelings; others, by the duty which I owe to my sovereign. Having thus discharged my duty, as well to myself as to my king, it is my intention to abstain individually from all further interference in this transaction."

Throughout the debates on this question, as it appears to us, Mr. Canning was very inferior to himself. The ministers were indefensible; and even he could not, on this occasion, make the worse appear the better cause. The speech of Sir Francis Burdett, one of the most eloquent delivered in parliament since the days of Fox, and Pitt, and Sheridan, produced an effect altogether electrifying. The whole house were entranced with admiration, and the honourable baronet sat down amidst loud and universal cheering. It was after this speech that Mr. Canning rose. He began by stating, he felt it his duty to recall the house to the considerations properly involved in the motion before them, and that, however much provoked by the speech of the honourable baronet, he should abstain, on the present occasion, from entering the lists with him. This declaration called forth a loud cheer from the opposition benches. Mr. Canning said, that the question of the conduct of ministers, was one which the house would, at no very distant period, have an opportunity of discussing. Come that question when it might,

ministers, whether as a body, or individually, would be fully prepared to meet it. He trusted, therefore, he should easily obtain credit, when he declared it was not from any want of readiness to meet the charges and insinuations which had been preferred, nor from the nature of the topics which had been employed in preferring them, nor from the vehemence with which those topics had been argued, nor from any exaggerated feeling of respect for the quarter from whence they had proceeded, that he should decline at the present time entering into the justification of his colleagues and himself. Whatever might be the fate of that night's question, ample opportunities for such justification would occur; and whenever they did so, he should be quite ready to meet with arms, he hoped, of as keen temper as any that had been, or could be, wielded against him, with denial and defiance, with vindication and retort, equal to those of the most boisterous accuser, or the loudest cheerer, who had raised his voice on the present occasion. "This, to be sure, is magniloquent courage, with a vengeance; and we do not wonder at Mr. Tierney's laugh at the expense of the orator. Mr. Tierney said, that as 'the better part of valour was discretion,' he commended the prudence of Mr. Canning in postponing his defence of ministers till the effect of Sir Francis Burdett's speech was done away. The very fact proved that the speech was unanswerable." The best practical comment upon this swaggering boast of the president of the board of control is, that he left his friends in the administration to vindicate themselves. His resignation relieved him from the necessity of redeeming a pledge, which he had given in the hour of intemperate excitement, but which

cool reflection soon convinced him was far beyond the reach of supernatural power, even though the prince of darkness were to consent to plead in *propria persona*. The motives of Mr. Canning's resignation, according to his own statement of them, are before the public; and the following letter on the subject, addressed to one of his constituents at Liverpool, will be read with lively interest.

Tuddenham, Norfolk, Dec. 22, 1820.

"My dear sir,—I left town on Wednesday, a few minutes after I had written to you, not thinking that I should be quite so soon set at liberty to make to you the communication promised in my letter of that morning. I had hitherto forborne to make the communication, in order that I might not any way embarrass others by a premature disclosure; and I certainly expected, in return, due notice of the time when it might suit them that the disclosure should be made. I have no doubt that the omission of such notice has been a mere oversight. I regret it only as it has prevented me from anticipating, with you and the rest of my friends at Liverpool, the announcement in a newspaper, of an event in which I know your kind partiality will induce you to feel a lively interest. The facts stated in *The Courier* of Wednesday evening are stated in substance correctly. I have resigned my office. My motives for separating myself from the government, (however reluctantly at a conjuncture like the present), is to be found solely in the proceedings and pending 'discussions' respecting the Queen. There is (as *The Courier* justly assumes) but this 'one point of difference' between my colleagues and myself. Those who may have done me the honour to observe my conduct in this unhappy affair from the beginning, will recollect that on the first occasion on which it was brought forward in the house of commons, I declared my determination to take as little part as possible in any subsequent stage of the proceedings. The declaration was made advisedly. It was made, not only after full communication with my colleagues, but as an alternative suggested on their

part for my then retirement from the administration. So long as there was a hope of amicable adjustment, my continuance in the administration might possibly be advantageous: that hope was finally extinguished by the failure of Mr. Wilberforce's address. On the same day on which the queen's answer to that address was received by the house of commons, I asked an audience of the king; and at that audience (which I obtained the following day), after respectfully repeating to his majesty the declaration which I had made a fortnight before in the house of commons, and stating the impossibility of my departing from it, I felt it my duty humbly to lay at his majesty's feet the tender of my resignation.

"The king, with a generosity which I can never sufficiently acknowledge, commanded me to remain in his service, abstaining as completely as I might think fit from any share in the proceedings respecting the queen, and *gave me full authority to plead his majesty's* EXPRESS COMMAND for so continuing in office.

"No occasion subsequently occurred in parliament (at least, no adequate occasion) for availing myself of the use of this authority, and I should have thought myself inexcusable in seeking an occasion for the purpose; but, from the moment of my receiving his majesty's gracious commands, I abstained entirely *from all interference on the subject of the queen's affairs.* I did not attend any meetings of the cabinet upon that subject. I had no share whatever in preparing or approving the bill of pains and penalties. I was (as you know) absent from England during the whole progress of that bill, and returned only after it had been withdrawn.

"The new state in which I found the proceedings upon my return to England required the most serious consideration; it was one to which I could not conceive the king's command, of June, to be applicable. For a minister to absent himself altogether from the expected discussions in the house of commons, intermixed as they were likely to be with the general business of the session, appeared to me quite impossible. To be present, as a minister taking no part in those discussions, could only be productive of embarrassment to myself, and of perplexity to my colleagues. To take any part in them was now, as always, out of the question.

"For these difficulties I saw no remedy, except in the humble but earnest renewal to my sovereign of the tender of my resignation, which has been now as most graciously accepted, as it was in the former instance indulgently declined.

"If some weeks have elapsed since my return to England, before I could arrive at this practical result, the interval has been chiefly employed in reconciling, or endeavouring to reconcile, my colleagues to a step taken by me in a spirit of the most perfect amity, and tending (in my judgment) as much to their relief as to my own.

"It remains for me only to add, that, having purchased, by the surrender of my office, the liberty of continuing to act in consistency with my original declaration, it is now my intention (but an intention perfectly gratuitous, and one which I hold myself completely free to vary, if I shall at any time see occasion for so doing) to be absent from England again, until the agitation of this calamitous affair shall be at an end.

"I am, &c. &c. &c.

"GEORGE CANNING."

From the above letter we learn the reason of Mr. Canning's visit to the Continent. On his return he meddled not with ministerial questions; but he assiduously attended to the discharge of his parliamentary duties. Never was there a more impartial and devoted representative than Mr. Canning. The interest of Liverpool, and of every individual of its inhabitants, he made his own. On questions of general policy he spoke when occasion required; and peculiarly distinguished himself on the subject of catholic emancipation. As we have recorded his sentiments at considerable length on this topic, we shall here introduce a few brilliant extracts from his speeches delivered in this session of parliament, and then dismiss the question from our pages, having given, what may be fairly considered, Mr. Canning's mind upon it in

its several relations to the country, to the church, and to the catholics themselves.

"Ireland now sits in the representative assembly of the empire; and, when she is allowed to come there, why is she not also allowed to elect members for it, from her catholic children? For three centuries, we have been erecting *mounds*, not to assist or improve, but to thwart nature: we have raised them high above the waters; and they have stood for many a year, frowning proud defiance upon all who attempted to cross them; but, in the course of ages, even they have been nearly broken down, and the narrow isthmus which they now form stands between two kindred seas; the fountains see each other, and would fain meet. Shall we fortify the mounds which are now almost in ruins, or shall we leave them to moulder away by time or accident—an event which, though distant, must happen; and which, when it does, will only confer a thankless favour? Or shall we cut away at once the isthmus that remains, and float upon the mingling wave the ark of our common constitution?

* * * *

"With the established religion of the country, the Roman Catholics must, of course, have nothing to do. None but those who profess the established religion of the state ought to pretend to the exercise of any functions *immediately* connected with that religion, or the ecclesiastical system in which it is embodied.

* * * *

"We are in the enjoyment of a peace, in a great degree achieved by catholic arms, and cemented by catholic blood.

* * * *

"It has been said, that we are not to open the door to an evil which, if once admitted, may not easily be removed. A lion is in the lobby: if admitted, we may not be able to get him out. The peers are few, but the commoners would overturn the protestant faith. They are in such masses at the door, ready to enter, that we dare not open the door, for fear of this many-headed catholic monster. The peers cannot be admitted to possession of their rights, to sit in the peers' house, which, in fact, was only suspended; for the forms were adhered to,

while the substance was suspended, for fear of ruin to the constitution. Is it possible to conceive this exclusion necessary? Are the Howards and the Talbots so degraded from the character of their ancestors, that the constitution would not be safe, if they were admitted to their seats? To make the supposition of danger plausible, it is necessary, first, that the catholic members should be returned in great numbers; secondly, that they should combine; and thirdly, that they should manage with such dexterity, as to induce the government or the monarch to join in their combination. Some persons have such an antipathy to cats, that they are sensible of the entrance of one to a room, before they have seen where it is perched. Now, I never felt annoyed at finding myself seated next a dissenter. I really could feel no apprehension of that sensitive and unaccountable kind. I will grant, for the argument, that one hundred catholic members should be returned, partly from Ireland and partly from England—I will grant that they combine—I will grant that they would combine for overturning the ecclesiastical establishment—but, granting all this, I ask, how are they to go about it? It must be, first, by force of reasoning; second, by force of numbers; or, third, by force alone. Is it then to be gravely stated, that the eloquence of the one hundred members would succeed in persuading gentlemen attached to the protestant establishment, to join them in destroying it, in order to make way for the magnificent edifice of mitred popery? Can any one believe, that the members who might, in consequence of this bill, be admitted to seats in parliament, would move such a project? Or can any one suppose, for a moment, that the slightest motion that had such an end in view would not be immediately resisted in parliament, as futile and impracticable?

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"The question with respect to numbers, is as hopeless as the chance of success in either of the cases I have alluded to; but, suppose there was any danger from the *catholics, from force alone,* is the rejection of the present measure the best means of calming any ebullition of that kind out of doors? Is it the safest remedy to say to the catholics, 'We shut our doors upon you for ever?'"

No sooner had Mr. Canning resigned his seat as president of the board of control, the duties of which he had discharged for nearly five years, with unrivalled ability and exemplary diligence, than the Court of Directors of the East India Company, in a manner the most liberal and flattering, expressed to him their grateful sense of the value of his services. They would not permit him to retire to a private station, without bearing with him to his retreat the united thanks of their honourable board: the following are correct copies of the letters which passed on this occasion:

Letter from the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Hon. the Court of Directors of the East India Company to the Right Hon. George Canning, President of the Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India.

"East India House, 22d Dec. 1820.

"Sir,—The court of Directors of the East India Company have unanimously requested us to convey to you the expression of their deep regret at your retirement from the high public station of president of the board of commissioners for the affairs of India; and at the same time to testify to you the sincere respect with which they have been impressed, by the able, upright, and conciliatory manner in which you have discharged the duties of that station. The functions of the right hon. board, over which you have presided for a period of nearly five years, have been exercised with so much candour and courtesy, as well as with such invariable attention to the interests both of the public and the company, that they have been almost entirely divested of the invidious character which must ever, in some degree, attach to a controlling board. We reflect with peculiar gratification, that, under your auspices, company's servants have been selected by the court of directors for the distinguished appointments of governors of two of the principal settlements in India, and have been cheerfully recommended by you to his majesty for

his gracious approbation. Whilst we assure you, in the name of the court, that you carry with you their sincerest wishes for every possible happiness, we desire individually to offer you our best acknowledgments for the attention and urbanity which we have uniformly experienced in the course of the communications which we have had the honour to hold with you, and which have been equally felt and acknowledged by our predecessors in the chairs.

"We have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient humble servants,

(Signed) "GEORGE ABERCROMBIE ROBINSON,
"THOMAS REID."

"The Right Honourable George Canning,"
&c. &c. &c.

Letter from the Right Hon. George Canning, President of the Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India, to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Honourable Court of Directors.

"Tuddenham, Norfolk, Dec. 25, 1820.

"Gentlemen,—I have received, with a satisfaction which I cannot adequately express, the letter which you did me the honour to address to me on the 22d instant. I beg you to say for me to the court of directors how sensible I am of their kindness, and how proud I am of their testimony. The office which has placed me in relation with that body is one of which, as you justly observe, the functions are necessarily of a somewhat invidious character. It would be presumptuous to arraign the wisdom of an institution, in the formation of which (with some slight changes and modifications) so many of the greatest politicians of our country in the present age have substantially concurred: but the fact is not the less true, that the board of commissioners for the affairs of India exhibits, perhaps, the single instance of an authority, the power belonging to which is simply corrective, coercive, and repressive, partaking in no degree of any of those attributes by which the exercise of harsh duties is in other instances softened and compensated; a power which may reduce or abolish establishments, but cannot create or extend them; may negative appointments, but cannot nominate

to them; may check or stint the flow of beneficence, but cannot originate or suggest a single act of grace or favour. To have administered for near five years such a power, not sacrificing (I hope) any of its duties, however disagreeable, to a fear of collision, and yet without incurring odium, would have been no small cause of self-congratulation. The letter which I have had the gratification to receive from you carries that feeling much higher; and makes me reflect upon the years which I have passed in the administration of your affairs, as upon the period of my public life by which I shall be most anxious to be remembered. My concurrence in the appointments of two of your most distinguished servants to the governments of Bombay and of Madras, is among the acts of that administration upon which I look back with the greatest complacency. I do not think, indeed, that the example of these appointments ought to pass into a rule: they are justifiable exceptions to a rule generally salutary. I can hardly conceive the case in which it would be expedient that the highest office of your government in India should be filled otherwise than from England; that one main link, at least, between the systems of the Indian and British governments ought, for the advantage of both (in my judgment), to be invariably maintained. But under the peculiar circumstances of British India at the time when Mr. Elphinstone first, and afterwards General Munro, were selected for their respective destinations, I am satisfied that every consideration of British as well as of Indian policy was best consulted by those selections. It is at least a presumption of my sincerity in this conviction, that I had no acquaintance with either of those gentlemen except through the medium of their services. It is a further satisfaction to me, that, with the exception of these two appointments, to which the law made my concurrence necessary, I can truly say, that with respect to any nominations in your service, of whatever description, abroad or at home, I have never exercised any sort of interference; much less have urged any personal wish, or asked any personal favour. This declaration I might not have thought necessary, had I not been informed that the contrary has been most unaccountably as well as unwarrantably imputed to me, in some late discussion in your court of proprietors. I am happy in an opportunity of address-

ing my denial of such an imputation to those who have the best means of estimating the truth of that denial. I take leave of you, gentlemen, and of the court of directors, with the sincerest wishes for the prosperity of the great empire committed to their charge, in the welfare of which I shall never cease, even in a private station, to take the deepest interest; and with a lasting sense of the candour and cordiality which have uniformly prevailed in my intercourse with all those members of your body with whom I have been brought immediately in contact. To you, gentlemen, who are the organs of the court upon the present occasion, I am very desirous of repeating my farewell in person; and (if the new commission should not be issued before I return to town next week) I shall be very glad to see you for that purpose at the India board, on Tuesday or Thursday morning (the 2d or 4th of January), as may best suit your convenience.

"I have the honour to be, gentlemen, your most obedient and faithful servant,

(Signed) "GEORGE CANNING."

"The Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the East India Company."

This correspondence took place in December 1820. On the March following still greater honour awaited the ci-devant president of the board of control. At a quarterly general court of proprietors of East India stock, Mr. Randle Jackson rose, and, after having moved for the letters which had passed between the court of directors and Mr. Canning to be read, the learned gentleman said, that

"Feeling, as he did, that perhaps few men had ever conducted so arduous a situation as Mr. Canning had to conduct for the last five years, with a heart more pure, or hands more clean, it would be wise, as well as obligatory, perhaps, on them, in another point of view, to record the sentiments contained in the letter of the court of directors. (Hear, hear!) But he

wished it to be most clearly understood that he had not the remotest idea, in bringing forward that proposition, of following it up by recommending any pecuniary recompense. (Hear, hear!) Whatever Mr. Canning was entitled to, on account of the office which he had held under the state, he ought to receive amply and honourably from the state. Considering the nature of the office, and the purpose for which it was established, they perhaps were not the persons (though an instance could be quoted where a contrary doctrine prevailed), who ought to hold out the boon of pecuniary reward, to a power expressly constituted to control the company. But he would say, that, if the zeal of approbation, if the warm feeling of esteem and satisfaction which the conduct of the right hon. gentleman must necessarily produce, led to any intimation of that kind, the proprietors would, in all probability, receive the first intimation that they should pursue a contrary course from his own high and disinterested mind."

Mr. Jackson further remarked,

"He would think it quite unworthy of the occasion if he threw out that sort of observation which could induce any person to consider this or to treat it as a political question. (Hear, hear!) However anxious, as undoubtedly they all must be, to uphold their own political sentiments in other and in fitter places, he was always of opinion that they should not be obtruded on that court; indeed he never knew any advantage to be obtained from introducing political subjects in this place, unless when they were clearly identified with the question immediately under discussion. (Hear, hear!) With these assurances, he would request permission to move, on a future occasion, something in substance of this description:—'That this court do cordially concur in the sentiments of the court of directors as expressed in their letter to Mr. Canning, and beg leave to assure him of their approbation of those services so honourably noticed by the executive body. Impressed with feelings of respect and esteem for his character, they wish him health and happiness, whether acting as a servant of the public or enjoying the calmer pleasures of private life.' The learned gentleman concluded by

observing, that he would move a resolution of this nature at the next general court, provided it was a special court."

In pursuance of this intimation, Mr. Jackson brought forward his motion, not before a general, but before a special, meeting of East India proprietors, convened expressly for the purpose of receiving it. The learned mover observed, on this occasion, with his usual eloquence,

"Whatever the public services of Mr. Canning might be, his sovereign had known them too long and too intimately to view them coldly; and those with whom he acted had too much knowledge of his urbanity and of his talents, not to do him all the justice which his qualities demanded on every proper occasion. When the party warmth of the present period shall have subsided, all that was due to him from his rivals and competitors would be freely rendered; and when he became the subject of historical observation, as all men must who moved in so exalted a sphere, whatever feeling might be entertained as to his political opinions, he had no doubt that to his integrity, to his great talents, to his liberality of mind, his suavity of manners, and his manliness of spirit, strict and ample justice would be done. (Hear, hear!) But the company had a different duty to perform. In his poor judgment, whenever a public body or a private individual felt reason to be satisfied and thankful, the expression of that feeling was not only *wise*, but *moral*. What the conduct of this right hon. gentleman had been towards the company he (Mr. Jackson) need not now state to the proprietors, since they had had an opportunity of reading that full and ample, though brief and eloquent, recognition of his services on the part of the court of directors. That Mr. Canning had a most arduous course to pursue every man would at once comprehend who was at all acquainted with the duties of the office he had filled. The upright manner in which he had performed those arduous duties had been declared by the unanimous voice of twenty-four directors, who bore testimony that, amidst all the difficulties of his situation, he had never forgotten one par-

ticle of his public duty, and that, though the functions with which he was invested were of a controlling, and so far of an invidious nature, yet they had been so exercised as to produce no complaint at this end of the town, but, on the contrary, to excite sentiments of great respect and unfeigned gratitude. This was a just cause of praise; because, when they recollected the extraordinary power and the extensive authority entrusted to the president of the board of control, it redounded much to the honour of the individual that a power, almost uncontrolled, had been exercised with fidelity, with urbanity, and with so much candour and courtesy, as to inspire a general feeling of pleasure and satisfaction. (Hear, hear!)"

The motion in substance, which we have already quoted, was seconded by the late Mr. Perry, the then editor and proprietor of the Morning Chronicle: it was supported also by Mr. Hume, whose politics were equally opposed to those of the right honourable gentleman. Mr. Perry dwelt with heartfelt complacency on the conduct of Mr. Canning, respecting the liberty of the press in India. He believed, he said, that the right honourable gentleman had, in one memorable instance, refrained from the exercise of his coercive and repressive power, and thereby conferred a great benefit on society.

"Every thinking man (Mr. Perry continued) must agree with him, that, next to the light of religion, the liberty of the press was most essential to the happiness of the human race. The liberty of the press was as necessary to happiness here as the light of revelation was to eternal happiness hereafter. The freedom of the press in India appeared to him to be most favourable to the best interests of the company, while, at the same time, it secured the happiness of the many millions of natives who lived under their beneficent government. It was perfectly well known that the press in India was placed in the hands of two distinct orders of men: the one, an enlightened race, native-

born British subjects, living under the sway of the company; the other order, the half-cast Indian, or mixed native race, who were comparatively uninformed. Over the press, in the hands of the former, the coercing, paralyzing, subduing power of the censorship had been suspended. That appalling power was now happily abolished; but while it existed there was, there could be, no liberty of the press. On the other hand, the native press was subject only to the visitation of the courts of law, as in England; it was amenable only to that salutary correction, which should always be applied, when the liberty of the press degenerated into licentiousness—when that great engine of public opinion was disgraced and degraded by private scandal, by licentious libel, by sedition, or by blasphemy. (Hear, hear!) What was the consequence of this system? Why it created this anomaly, that the press in India was absolutely forbidden to the intelligent, enlightened, and liberal part of the community, while it was opened to the half-informed and unenlightened portion;—yes, it was open to that body of men, who were likely, by their half-knowledge, by their superficial information, to spread disaffection, and disseminate every thing that was licentious throughout the country; whereas it was wholly shut against those in whose hands it would have been subservient to all the purposes of good government and of public happiness; for it must be recollected, that in all cases it was from half-knowledge, from half-information, from that superficial trifling which they might witness amongst the reformers of foreign countries, that danger was to be apprehended. It was that deficiency of knowledge which created mischief. The full blaze of intelligence never produced an ill effect; it never shook the security of a government, or weakened the morality of a people."

After an opposition, as weak in its argument as it was ungenerous in its object, and proceeding from persons of little or no consideration, except as proprietors of stock, a distinction which is open to every body that can afford it, the motion was triumphantly carried. How grateful this was to the feelings of

Mr Canning, will appear from the following letter, addressed by him to the court.

"Gloucester Lodge, April 5, 1821.

"Gentlemen,—I have to thank you for the copy of a resolution passed yesterday in the court of proprietors of the East India company, on the subject of the letter, which you did me the honour to address to me on the 22nd of December.

"I cannot but feel myself highly flattered and gratified by the concurrence of the court of proprietors, in the sentiments which you then conveyed to me on the part of the court of directors: and I request, that you will have the goodness to take any proper opportunity of making known my due and grateful sense of so honourable and unlooked-for an expression of confidence and kindness.

"I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) "GEO. CANNING."

In the May of 1822 we witnessed an event of the most gratifying character, when M. Chateaubriand and Mr. Canning dined at Freemasons' Tavern, at the anniversary of the literary fund. A scene was here exhibited, so interesting and delightful, as will probably never occur again, when the representatives of two of the greatest and most polished nations in the world, honoured by their presence and sanction, the festival of literature and the sacred anniversary of charity. Among many and delightful speeches of the evening, the address of Mr. Canning was proudly pre-eminent for the beauties it contained, and for the effect which it produced, on a numerous and a genial auditory. We had heard him on previous occasions, we have heard him since, but never, to our recollection, with that fervour of animation and interest, which distinguished this beautiful oration, and have only to regret that, at this lapse of time, our

memory will allow us to give merely a sketch of its interesting character. He was desired by M. de Chateaubriand, who was then ambassador at our court, to return his thanks for the honour thus conferred on him by the assembly. He commenced his speech with an apology of the most elegant and delicate character. He could not, he said, rise without expressing his shame and regret, that the present was the first occasion of the kind, at which he had yet been present. "I might," he said, "plead in extenuation of my neglect, the hurry and occupation of a life dedicated, for the most part, to the service of my king and country;" but he added, with an enthusiasm of language and of manner, which was perfectly inspiring, "I should feel still more ashamed, could I confess the calls of honour or of ambition had rendered me inattentive to the demands of literature, or deaf to the sacred voice of benevolence." He next alluded more particularly to M. Chateaubriand, spoke of the high reputation which he enjoyed, not merely in his own country, but among other nations, and expressed, in a manner at once simple and elegant, the gratification which that nobleman derived from the applause with which his health had been drank. He then alluded, with that felicity of application for which his speeches were ever distinguished, to the relative situation of the two countries, and hailed the present occasion as a happy omen of that friendship, peace, and union, which, after a war of twenty-five years, would, he hoped, unite France and Great Britain as two of the most powerful and influential nations of the world, in the sublime object of forwarding the cause

of letters, and of humanity, and with them, the best interests of the whole human race.

That these professions of devotedness to the cause of benevolence were perfectly sincere, Mr. Canning's whole life bore ample testimony. He was eminently distinguished by the charities of human nature, and was perpetually diffusing happiness around the circle in which he moved. No man could be more alive to appeals made to his compassion. By his humane interference, he saved the life of one of the Cato-street conspirators. It is said that, being on a visit at his friend's house, Mr. Ellis, now Lord Seaford, at Seaford, in taking one of his early morning walks, he was caught in a very violent squall, when he was invited into the signal-house on Beachy Head, occupied by a lieutenant in the navy, where every civility was paid him as a stranger, then wholly unknown to the inmates. Mr. Canning, while taking his homely breakfast under this hospitable roof, amused himself with noticing the younger branches of the family, which were numerous. Mr. Canning said to the veteran, "Why do you not send the boy to sea?" "How can I afford that?" replied the lieutenant; "I assure you, sir, it is with difficulty I find the means of filling out their jackets; would to God I could get him to sea!" "And then," said Mr. Canning, "of what profession are your daughters, how do they employ themselves?—one, I see, is grown up." "Why, sir, this eldest girl is astonishingly clever at her needle, and I should like to have her sent to some dressmaker's." The stranger guest departed; but in a few days the boy was sent for, fitted out as a midshipman,

and is now a lieutenant; the girl was provided with the situation suited to her talents, with a lady in Pall Mall, and is since respectably married. The whole expense was defrayed by their generous morning guest, and the tears of this veteran's family follow him to the grave.

The pre-eminent services rendered by Mr. Canning to the East India Company, as president of the board of control, the golden opinions which all the members of that most influential chartered body entertained of his character, and the universal conviction that no man was better qualified, or more entitled, to occupy the highest office which they had in their patronage to bestow, induced them at length to confer upon him the appointment of governor-general of India. When we consider the state of the cabinet at this period, and the little reason Mr. Canning had to conclude, that he should be permitted to serve his country in the manner most gratifying to his heart, and in a station best suited to the development of his principles, and the display of his talents, we are not at all surprised at his acquiescence in a measure which opened the most brilliant prospects before him, where he could realize fortune and fame, and secure, by his known justice and moderation, the lasting gratitude of sixty millions of his fellow-creatures. We are not sure, indeed, that the dreams of laudable ambition, as he contemplated the sceptre that was just passing into his hands, were not a little disturbed by other visions nearer home, and that the sigh of regret did not, amid all the splendour which charmed his imagination in the distance, betray his unconquerable reluctance to quit his native shores. Ambition in another hemisphere beckoned him away, but the star of

hope, the star of his destiny, lingered over the scene of many a glorious triumph, and here he would willingly have remained. Having, however, resolved upon his departure, Mr. Canning paid what he considered his farewell visit to Liverpool. In his speech on this occasion, the vacillation of his feelings is strikingly apparent. He says adieu, with an irresolution of manner which seems to intimate how gladly he would yield to any mandate that should counter-order his destination. On the 23d of August, he dined with the Canning Club. On the Friday following, a farewell dinner was given to him in the Lyceum news-room, which was fitted up for the occasion with great taste. Between four and five hundred noblemen and gentlemen sat down to dinner. The subjoined address was presented to the right honourable gentleman at Seaforth-house, the seat of his zealous friend, John Gladstone, Esq. M.P., on Friday, the 30th of August, by a deputation from the associated commercial bodies of the port, consisting of the gentlemen whose names were appended to it, and who were of all parties in politics. On which occasion, Mr. Irlam, as chairman of the oldest association (the West India), addressed Mr. Canning, on behalf of the deputation, as follows:

"Mr. Canning,—We have the honour of waiting upon you for the purpose of presenting an address from the merchants of Liverpool, expressive of the high sense they entertain of the services which you have rendered them, since you have been their representative in parliament, and which I shall now have the pleasure of reading:

"'*To the Right Honourable George Canning.*

"'Sir,—Having been deputed, by the associated commercial

bodies of Liverpool, to convey to you their respectful acknowledgments for the various and important services rendered by you to this town, whilst you have been its representative in parliament, we have much pleasure and satisfaction in expressing the deep sense they entertain of the obligations you have imposed upon them by your constant and zealous attention to their interests; by the kindness and impartiality with which all the applications for your assistance have been received; and by the prompt exertion of your splendid talents in the promotion of every object in which the character and prosperity of this great commercial community have been involved.

"'We, therefore, beg to tender you their most grateful and hearty thanks, accompanied by their best wishes for your future health and happiness.

"'We have the honour to be, very respectfully,

"'Sir,

"'Your most obedient humble servants.'

[Here follow twenty signatures, the names of the chairmen and deputy chairmen of ten associations.]

"'It is only necessary for me to add,' continued Mr. Irlam, 'that this address has been approved and sanctioned by the UNANIMOUS votes of ALL the mercantile associations; and to assure you, that we have personally the highest gratification in placing it in your hands.'"

To this address Mr. Canning, sensibly affected, replied as follows:

"Gentlemen,—It is needless for me to say, as you cannot but yourselves perceive, what feelings this unanimous expression of your approbation has excited in my mind; or how particularly I am affected by what you, sir, have been kind enough to communicate to me with respect to the combination of signatures affixed to this address.

"It has been my endeavour, as I felt it to be my duty, to avoid, in my attention to your interests and concerns, general and individual, any shade of discrimination, with reference to divisions of sentiment which might prevail among you with re-

spect either to local or national politics. The marked and eager concurrence of so many persons of politics decidedly adverse to mine, in so peculiar and so cordial a manifestation of acknowledgment, satisfies me that I have been fortunate enough to execute my purpose of impartiality. Of that impartiality I now reap the reward.

"To those among you with whom I have the happiness to agree in political sentiment, and to whom I owe so many obligations for continued marks of friendship and support, it is unnecessary for me, now, to repeat my sense of those obligations. They will not suspect me of being wanting in what is due to them. And, I am sure, they will pardon me for putting as prominently forward as I have done, the particular gratification which they will feel with me and for me,—the gratification arising from the union, on this occasion, with their names, of the names of so many of those persons to whom they and I have been strenuously, but honourably opposed."

The speeches of Mr. Canning, delivered at the entertainments which were given in honour of his visit, are among the most brilliant effusions of his highly gifted mind. They relate, however, principally to topics, and convey doctrines and sentiments with which we have grown familiar during our progress in tracing these recollections of his public life. What is really invested with a character of novelty we shall quote. The first speech at the Canning Club, delivered the 23d of August, we give entire.

"Gentlemen, I am really and unaffectedly overpowered by the manner in which you have had the goodness to receive the mention of my name; and if my worthy friend, your president, was apprehensive that, in drinking the last toast, which included what might be understood as a compliment to yourselves, amongst a great number of your fellow-townsmen and fellow-countrymen, you were in danger of incurring the charge of egotism, how much more difficult is the task which is imposed

upon me, of acknowledging, in adequate terms, the kindness which you have manifested towards me individually?

"Gentlemen, there is nothing of egotism, there is nothing of undue partiality, in your cherishing towards each other those feelings of respect and regard which naturally arise from a community of opinion. On the contrary, all the analogies of our political constitution peculiarly favour such associations. They are eminently calculated for the conservation of those principles in which they originate. You love your country, as comprehending in itself all the charities of private life; and when, in cultivating those charities, you form amongst yourselves societies such as this, cemented by an agreement in sound principles,—principles of attachment to the free, the popular, but, at the same time, monarchical character of the government under which it is our happiness to live,—you create so many depositories of those principles, uninvidious when the feeling of loyalty is generally prevalent, but useful, in the highest degree, when the contagion of other principles is abroad. In northern climes, the essence of a generous vintage is often preserved in a small liquid nucleus, which remains unfrozen amidst the surrounding congelation:—that nucleus, when the time of thaw comes, diffuses itself through the whole, and communicates to the mass its spirit and its flavour. So, I trust, that in all times, even in times such as the worst that we have seen, and such as, I hope, we are not likely soon to see again,—in this club will be constantly preserved the spirit of loyalty and constitutional freedom, to be diffused, when the occasion shall arise, amongst the community with which you are surrounded.

"Gentlemen, to come, however reluctantly, to what more immediately concerns myself, and to the occasion to which your worthy chairman has alluded as now bringing me among you,—that of bidding you farewell. It is now ten years since I have been connected with this town. It is nearly as long since this society grew up out of that connexion. During that period, I can say, I hope without the danger of contradiction, that there is not, so far as I know, a single individual—I am sure I can say, that there is not a single interest, belonging to this town, which has not had, when required, its share of my active atten-

tion, and which has not, and ever will have, a share in my most intense and anxious good-will.

"Gentlemen, you embodied yourselves at a time when the country was in great difficulties, both at home and abroad. The councils to which we gave our cordial support have gloriously surmounted the external difficulties, and surmounted them,—not, as those who were then opposed to us recommended,—by compromise, by truckling, or by a mere accidental, lucky escape; —but by perseverance, by steadiness, by confidence in ourselves, in our country, and in our cause, by a triumph without example, as our exertions were without precedent or parallel.

"Unfortunately, great efforts are not to be made without great sacrifices; and, as the overstrained exertion of the political, as well as of the physical body, produces lassitude and exhaustion, unfortunately, the conclusion of our dangers from without was followed by internal dangers, which, if it was not more difficult to overcome, it was infinitely more painful to combat. In combating such dangers, we were animated by none of the feelings which sustained us during the conflict with the foreign foe. We felt, that we were at war with those who ought to have been our fellows in sentiment as in country; and our triumph was painful in its execution, though just and merciful in its purpose. Long may those over whom it was achieved share, in peace and tranquillity, the benefit of its achievement!

"I would fain hope, indeed, gentlemen, that we have no more such struggles, no more such triumphs, to apprehend. Looking abroad through Europe, I see no near prospect of a call upon this country for any foreign exertion. At home, I do not disguise from myself that I see great difficulties and great distress; but I see those difficulties and that distress in quarters where education and intelligence may be expected to counteract intemperance of feeling, to correct prejudice, and to discountenance faction. The suffering was, erewhile, in those classes of society with whom suffering naturally begets impatience and absorbs reflection, and delivers over the sufferer, in pardonable and pitiable delusion, a prey to every designing demagogue who points out resistance as a remedy. It exists now, I am grieved to acknowledge, in higher classes of society, not less entitled to sym-

pathy, not less objects of compassion, and, where practicable, of relief; but who know that their safety, as well as their prosperity, is bound up with the peace of the kingdom, and who, when they are satisfied that the privations which they now endure are such as neither laws nor governments can cure, will be cautious not to lend their authority to any schemes which, under pretence of alleviating present and partial evils, may lead to the disturbance of their country. I am confident, that having, during a great struggle of so many years, preached patience to the humbler classes of the community, the higher will not now desert their duty, by refusing, in their turn, to practise the same degree of patience which has been generally displayed by those beneath them.

"For, gentlemen, apart from the interests of separate classes, we have all a common interest in the conservation of that order of things which is the security of the whole. We must feel, I am sure, and none feel more than those whom I am addressing, that it would be a peevish and unthinking spirit which, under the irritation of a temporary inconvenience, should quarrel, not with the immediate sources of immediate suffering, but with all that surrounds them, with all that is contemporary with them, with passive circumstances as well as with active causes; as a child, in its anger, beats the ground because for a moment it has fallen. To maintain to our native land that supremacy which it has long exercised, we must look to the maintenance of its institutions; and if, in a moment of uncomfortable pressure, we lay hold, in anger, on those established institutions, and shake them to ruin, we may be perfectly sure, that, while we procure no remedy for the evil that assails us, we shall take from our posterity,—probably from ourselves, the means of safety as well as the hope of reparation.

"But, gentlemen, enough of general reflection. In my desire to avoid the temptation of egotism in what I address to you, I have wandered from my immediate purpose.

"Gentlemen, I owe it to you, in common with all my constituents, to state the grounds on which I am about to separate from you. I have never (I call past events to bear me witness)—I have never sought or accepted office, except on principles of honour. I have never hesitated to relinquish it, when I have

thought that either public duty or individual honour required its relinquishment. In 1812, when a private individual, and having recently declined the highest official honours of the state, I was returned by you to parliament, after a contest of unexampled exertion. You were good enough to return me again, when I became a member of the administration. I have since quitted that administration, on a question wholly unconnected with its general course of policy, and without the smallest diminution of attachment to the public principles which I have uniformly professed, or the smallest relaxation in my support of them. When called to office, in 1816, I was called to a department perfectly alien from my official habits, and with the business of which I had no previous acquaintance: but, in the course of nearly five years' diligent administration of that department, it has so happened, that I am supposed, by those in whom the law has vested the power of appointing to the government of India, to have qualified myself for the more immediate direction of that government, over the concerns of which it has been my duty to exercise a distant superintendence.

"Many obvious circumstances, undoubtedly, would make it more agreeable to me to remain in this country. I see around me more than one hundred and sixty motives for so wishing to remain. But, gentlemen, I hold that a public man is, unless he can show cause of honour or duty to the contrary, bound to accept a trust which he is selected as competent to administer for the public interest.

"Gentlemen, those in whom the law, as I have said, vests the power of appointment (subject to the approbation of the crown) have done me the honour to think, that I may be the humble instrument of conferring some benefit on the population of an extensive empire. I fear they overrate my capacity for the task which they impose upon me, as your kindness has overrated my services to you. But I have not felt myself at liberty to decline a task at once so difficult and so honourable; I must execute it to the best of my ability. Gentlemen, in leaving your service, it is my pride to carry with me testimonies of your satisfaction. I hope I may, without indecent vanity, add, that in quitting the house of commons, it is a consolation to me to quit it not defeated nor disgraced.

"If, gentlemen, you and I are separated by space, let us continue united by sentiment and by kindness. I leave here, in your keeping, a name, insignificant as it belongs to an individual, but consecrated by the principles of which you have made it the symbol. Guard it, not for its own sake, but for the sake of those its accompaniments. While it may be my lot to administer a government of necessity in a great measure discretionary, I shall reflect, that there is, in my own country, a community in which my name is cherished, as associated with rational liberty, with the principles of a free government, and with the institutions of a free people. Guard you my memory, and I shall cherish yours. Removed from you by thousands of miles, it will be a pleasure to me to think, that I am occasionally remembered by you; and be assured, that, in whatever part of the world I may be stationed, the members of this society will have a place in my remembrance and regard.

"Gentlemen, permit me to conclude with proposing, with a slight variation, your usual standing toast—'Permanency and prosperity to this club.'"

In a life of Mr. Canning, it would be absolutely criminal to omit the following fine passage, which is in the purest taste of classical elegance, and is as remarkable for its power as its beauty.

"I do verily and sincerely believe, that there is no proposition more false than that the influence of the crown, any more than its direct power, has increased comparatively with the increasing strength, wealth, and population of the country. To these, if the crown be good for any thing at all in the constitution, it is necessary that its power and influence should bear some reasonable proportion. I deny that in the house of commons,—I deny that in the house of lords, such an increase can be shown; but further I contend, that, in speculating upon the practical play of our constitution, we narrow our view of its efficient principles, of its progress, and of the state in which it now stands, if we do not take into account other powers, extrinsic to the two houses of parliament, which are at work in

the moral and political world, and which require to be balanced and counterpoised in their operation.

"What should we think of that philosopher, who, in writing, at the present day, a treatise upon naval architecture and the theory of navigation, should omit wholly from his calculation that new and mighty power,—new, at least, in the application of its might,—which walks the water, like a giant rejoicing in his course;—stemming alike the tempest and the tide;—accelerating intercourse, shortening distances;—creating, as it were, unexpected neighbourhoods, and new combinations of social and commercial relation;—and giving to the fickleness of winds and the faithlessness of waves the certainty and steadiness of a highway upon the land? Such a writer, though he might describe a ship correctly; though he might show from what quarters the winds of heaven blow, would be surely an incurious and an idle spectator of the progress of nautical science, who did not see in the power of steam a corrective of all former calculations. So, in political science, he who, speculating on the British constitution, should content himself with marking the distribution of acknowledged technical powers between the house of lords, the house of commons, and the crown, and assigning to each their separate provinces,—to the lords their legislative authority,—to the crown its *veto* (how often used?)—to the house of commons its power of stopping supplies (how often, in fact, necessary to be resorted to?)—and should think that he had thus described the British constitution as it acts and as it is influenced in its action; but should omit from his enumeration that mighty power of public opinion, embodied in a free press, which pervades, and checks, and, perhaps, in the last resort, nearly governs the whole; such a man would, surely, give but an imperfect view of the government of England as it is now modified, and would greatly underrate the counteracting influences against which that of the executive power has to contend."

The following will be read with different feelings, according to the political views of the readers: but whatever other emotions it may excite, it will be sure to produce risibility.

"Parliamentary reform is the panacea for every evil. I read, a few days ago, (I cannot immediately recollect where), a story of an artist who had attained great eminence in painting, but who had directed his art chiefly to one favourite object. That object happened to be a *red lion*. His first employment was at a public-house, where the landlord allowed him to follow his fancy. Of course the artist recommended a *red lion*. A gentleman in the neighbourhood, having a new dining-room to ornament, applied to the artist for his assistance; and, in order that he might have full scope for his talents, left to him the choice of a subject for the principal compartment of the room. The painter took due time to deliberate; and then, with the utmost gravity and earnestness—'Don't you think,' said he to his employer, 'that a handsome *red lion* would have a fine effect in this situation?' The gentleman was not entirely convinced, perhaps; however, he let the painter have his way in this instance; determined, nevertheless, that in his library, to which he next conducted the artist, he would have something of more exquisite device and ornament. He showed him a small panel over his chimney-piece. 'Here,' says he, 'I must have something striking. The space, you see, is but small, the workmanship must be proportionably delicate.' 'What think you,' says the painter, after appearing to dive deep into his imagination for the suggestion, 'what think you of a *small red lion?*' Just so it is with parliamentary reform. Whatever may be the evil, the remedy is a parliamentary reform; and the utmost variety that you can extort from those who call themselves 'moderate reformers' is, that they will be contented with a *small* red lion!

"Gentlemen, I wish that these theories were only entertaining; but they have mischief in them; and I wish that against them the country should be on its guard. I confess I am against even the *smallest* of these *red lions;* I object not to the size, but to the species. I fear the smallest would be but the precursor of the whole menagerie; and that, if once propitiated by his smallness, you open the door for his admission, you would find, when you wanted him to turn out again, that he had been pampered to a formidable size in his cage.

"Gentlemen, in the times in which we live, there is (disguise it how we may) a struggle going on, in some countries an open, and in some a tacit struggle, between the principles of monarchy and democracy. God be praised, that in that struggle we have not any part to take. God be praised, that we have long ago arrived at all the blessings that are to be derived from that which alone can end such a struggle beneficially,—a compromise and intermixture of those conflicting principles. It is not, as it appears to me, the duty of this country to side either with the assailants, where they aim at too much, nor with those who stand on the defensive, when they will grant nothing. England has only to maintain herself on the basis of her own solid and settled constitution, firm, unshaken, a spectatress interested in the contest only by her sympathies; not a partisan on either side, but, for the sake of both, a model, and ultimately, perhaps, an umpire. Should we be led, by any false impulse of chivalrous benevolence, to participate in the struggle itself, we commit, and thereby impair, our authority; we abandon the position in which we might hereafter do most good, and may bring the danger of a foreign struggle home to our own hearths and to our own institutions.

"Gentlemen, with an audience less enlightened than that which I have had the honour to address, I should have avoided topics of such general interest, and confined myself to the particulars of our local connexion. But, gentlemen, our connexion is one of principle; it had its foundation in principle; on that it has been raised and cemented. Gentlemen, whatever may be my future destination, it will be a comfort unspeakable to me to have laid, in that connexion, the foundation, I trust, of mutual and lasting regard;—which has cheered every stage of our intercourse, and will long survive our separation."

In the following extract, the reader will perceive a clear confirmation of what we have said regarding the state of Mr. Canning's mind on the subject of his new appointment.

"Gentlemen, it may, perhaps, be expected of me, especially

after the speech of my worthy friend, your president, that I should say a few words to you on the topics to which he has alluded. I have doubted much and long whether I should refer to those topics at all, or should persevere in the silence which I have hitherto prescribed to myself upon them;—whether I should incur the risk, on the one hand, of being supposed not to have dealt openly with you; or, on the other hand, the risk of that misconstruction, of various sorts, to which a public man, who speaks of himself, must expect to be exposed. On full reflection, I have determined to brave the latter danger rather than the former. I prefer submitting to any misconstruction, to any inconvenience, rather than that it should ever be thought that I had repaid your unbounded confidence with any thing like concealment or distrust. Gentlemen, after this preface, you will, perhaps, be, in one sense, disappointed to hear, that all that I have to say is, that, upon my honour, I have nothing to tell. But it is as necessary for me to make that confession, as it would have been to make a communication, had I any to make. I do assure you, that I know as little as any man that now listens to me, of any arrangements likely to grow out of the present state of things. I cannot pretend ignorance, indeed, of rumours which are in every one's mouth; but I assure you, upon my honour, that, at the moment at which I am speaking to you, I have nothing either to tell or to conceal.

"Gentlemen, you will not expect that I shall enter into any explanation as to what might be the decision which I might think it right to take upon any such occurrence as these rumours have in contemplation. This only, gentlemen, I can frankly declare to you, that, in any such case, my decision would be founded upon an honest and impartial view of public considerations alone, and that it would be determined, not by a calculation of interests, but by a balance and comparison of duties.

"Enough, gentlemen, on a topic to which I doubt whether I should, even now, have alluded, but for the most unexpected, although amicable provocation of my worthy friend in the chair; and I have only now to hope, that having been, as I learn, misconstrued on account of my silence in another place, I shall not be misconstrued in an opposite direction on account of what I

have said here. From my silence then, it has been inferred, that I intended ostentatiously to declare a determination to refuse office at home, if it should be proposed to me. I beg I may not be misconstrued now in an opposite sense, as intending to express, or as feeling, in the slightest degree, any anxiety, any expectation or desire for such a proposal. My only anxiety, I most solemnly declare, is to state the truth to those who have a right to know it, inasmuch as their kindness and attachment to me give them an interest in whatever concerns me."

During this visit a piece of plate was presented to Mr. Canning; the design by Mr. Chantry, and the execution by Rundle and Bridge. It is thus described by the press of the town:

"It is a centre ornament, or candelabrum, forty-two inches high, and upwards of sixty in circumference at the base. It is silver gilt, and weighs upwards of one thousand ounces. The base is in the tripod form, and rests upon three tortoises. In the plinth are three compartments, six inches wide by two and a half high. The first compartment contains a view of the port of Liverpool. A ship under sail appears in the foreground of the picture, and in the background George's Dock Pier-head, with St. Nicholas's church, the Town-hall, St. Paul's, St. George's, and Thomas's churches in the distance. The second compartment contains a representation of a section of the Town-hall. The scene chosen is that of an election. Hustings are erected in the front: bars for several candidates are open: a crowd of spectators is congregated before them; and a coach, filled with voters in the interest of Mr. Canning, accompanied with music and flags, the latter having inscribed on them, 'The British Constitution,' 'The Friend of the Pilot that weather'd the Storm,' 'Canning for ever!' &c., is represented in the act of approaching his bar. The right honourable gentleman appears in the centre, surrounded by his friends, in the act of addressing the multitude of spectators, some of whom are elevated upon the hustings, loudly cheering their favourite candidate.

The 'State of the Poll' appears on the side of Mr. Canning's bar; and, in the distance, the lofty buildings on the north side of Dale-street are seen, their windows and roofs crowded with spectators, surveying the animated scene beneath. The third compartment exhibits a view of the interior of the house of commons, the theatre in which Mr. Canning so often displays his great and unrivalled talents. The speaker is in the chair: the mace is on the table before him: the benches are crowded with members; and Mr. Canning is represented as standing on the floor, in the act of addressing the chair. The base of the pedestal represents a coral rock. Upon it, at the angles, are seated three beautiful classic figures, under palm-tree leaves. The first figure is emblematical of SCIENCE. In her hand she holds a book, written in Oriental characters, which she is in the act of perusing. At her feet are spread a variety of appropriate scientific instruments and symbols. The second figure is a personification of NAVIGATION. The compass rests upon her knee; and in her hand she holds the log-line and lead. On the right, at her feet, a staff, with a union-jack on it, an anchor and cable, a rudder, a capstern, and other nautical emblems are appropriately disposed: on the right, a buoy. COMMERCE is the third figure. She holds in her right hand a laurel crown, and in her left a palm branch, emblematic of the peace and harmony which commercial intercourse creates amongst the different nations of the globe. Various appropriate symbols are displayed at her feet also. On the right appear a bale of goods and other articles of commercial traffic: on the left, a cornucopia, or horn of plenty, the caduceus, &c. &c. These three personifications of the genius of Science, of Navigation, and of Commerce, are exquisitely beautiful. The figures are most chastely executed, and the drapery is well disposed. They are amongst the most prominent excellences of the design. On the pedestal, between these figures, are three tablets. The first tablet exhibits the arms of the borough of Liverpool, tastefully executed. The next displays Mr. Canning's arms, richly embossed, with the motto—*Ne cede malis sed contra.* The third contains the inscription, very neatly executed, on a flat gold field, in raised bright letters. It is as follows:

'PRESENTED
TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
GEORGE CANNING,
BY A NUMEROUS BODY OF HIS FRIENDS,
FREEMEN AND INHABITANTS OF
LIVERPOOL,
ON HIS BEING APPOINTED GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF INDIA,
JULY, 1822,
IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT
OF HIS ZEALOUS AND IMPARTIAL ATTENTION
TO THE INTERESTS OF ALL HIS CONSTITUENTS,
FOR A PERIOD OF TEN YEARS,
IN THE COURSE OF WHICH
HE HAS BEEN FOUR TIMES ELECTED
THEIR REPRESENTATIVE IN PARLIAMENT;
AND IN TESTIMONY OF THEIR RESPECT,
AS WELL FOR HIS PRIVATE VIRTUES
AS FOR HIS DISINTERESTED AND INDEPENDENT
PUBLIC CONDUCT;
AND OF THEIR ADMIRATION
OF THOSE TRANSCENDANT TALENTS,
AS A STATESMAN AND AN ORATOR,
WITH WHICH HE HAS UNIFORMLY AND FEARLESSLY
MAINTAINED THE TRUE PRINCIPLES OF
THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION.'

"A handsome fluted naval column springs from the pedestal. Its base is begirt with a cable; and three dolphins are represented disporting themselves at the angles. On the upper part of the column, and surrounding it, are inscribed, 'Election of 1812,' 'Election of 1816,' 'Election of 1818,' 'Election of 1820;' the four periods at which Mr. Canning was returned to parliament as representative of Liverpool. Above these inscriptions appear the prows of three ships, with figure-heads; the first representing a native of Asia, the second of Africa, and the third of America. The capital of the column is beautifully chaste. From it issue acanthus leaves; attached to which are branches for nine lights. The summit of the whole is crowned

by a beautiful classic figure, emblematic of the Genius of Liverpool, her right hand resting on a ship's rudder, and her left on a broad and glittering shield, on which is depicted the fabulous bird, the LIVER. On her head she wears a mural crown; and her drapery falls in simple elegance over her finely proportioned form."

Just as Mr. Canning was preparing to quit England, he was invited by his sovereign to take a high situation in the cabinet, and once more, as the secretary for foreign affairs, to maintain the dignity and extend the glory of his country. A vacancy had been made in the council, and a blank in the ministry, by the sudden death of the Marquis of Londonderry, the Lord Castlereagh of the political world, who had so long and so miserably misgoverned this great empire. He died by his own hand. In his removal, the greatest impediment to liberal principles and a noble and just policy was demolished. The Marplot was gone, and the drama was now to develop its grandeur without interruption, disorder, or perplexity. To the deceased nobleman, whose public conduct we ever considered as little less than one continued crime against the constitution and liberties of his country, it is due to say, that his private life abounded in acts of benevolence, generosity, and virtue. We date the decease of Lord Londonderry as the commencement of a new epoch in the British government. The change at first was not visible. But a master-spirit was at work, and the power that had been accustomed to paralyze it by a countercharm was no more. Mr. Canning thus became at once the second in office, but the first in public opinion and in real efficiency.

CHAPTER X.

Domestic and Foreign Policy of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs—Speech on the Silk Trade—War of France with Spain—Fracas with Mr. Brougham—Visit to Plymouth—Freedom of the Borough presented to him—Speech on the Occasion—Mr. Brougham's Motion on the Proceedings at Demerara against the Missionary Smith—Recognition of the new American States—Remonstrance of Spain—Mr. Canning's Reply—The Panic—Mr. Canning's Defence of Ministers—Negro Slavery—Visits France—Dines with Charles X.—The State of Portugal—The King's Message—Mr. Canning's splendid Speech—Account of the Effect of its Delivery—Mr. Canning's Illness—Recovery—The Retirement of Lord Liverpool—Corn Laws—Catholic Emancipation—Declared Premier—Secession of the Tories—New Administration—Alarming Indisposition—Death—Funeral—Character.

THE office of foreign secretary placed Mr. Canning not where he ought to have been placed at the critical moment when he consented once more to work the vessel of the state. His proper station was the helm. But though his recent appointment gave him not all the power which would have rendered his talents and experience available to their full extent, it enabled him, with such a premier as the Earl of Liverpool, and such coadjutors as Mr. Huskisson, Mr. Robinson, and others, to effect a gradual improvement both in our domestic and foreign policy. It has been well said of him, at this period, that "he endeavoured to heal the intestine wounds of his country, and to pour balm where aristocratical mismanagement had been insidiously lacerating. He availed himself of advantages from late experience, and the advance-

ment of political knowledge, which the recent convulsion of empires afforded him, together with the operations of the great innovator, time. He knew that to stem the tide of public opinion, and keep the nation flourishing, was as impracticable as to drain the ocean; that he could not retreat, arrest improvement, and chain down the intellect of the age; for he could see the inevitable reaction that would ensue, while he could not measure its limits. The friends of the late Marquis of Londonderry, in their insane admiration of that nobleman, assert that Mr. Canning only carried his plans into effect. It was most singular, if this were the case, that the deceased nobleman never stumbled upon one of these principles, among the blunders of his public career—that they only came to light since his decease. Not one word of these assertions is credited by those who know how to appreciate the talents of the marquis, or remember how anti-British, as well as short-sighted, and narrow, was his policy. He was the contemner of his country's constitution, the interests of which he neglected at the general peace; the pander to the sovereign despots of Europe, and the oppressor of the weaker nations. His positive deficiency of capacity made him incapable of taking one enlarged or combined view. His want of genius was open and palpable; he was merely the office statesman, whom years of drudgery had qualified for common routine business. The Marquis of Londonderry apply philosophy to politics! he who had never, it is probable, read a book since his school-days, and whose inherent and acquired knowledge, beyond political forms, was contemptible! If this be true, we have indeed an age of miracles returned. All Eng-

land can judge of the spirit of the marquis's administration, and knows that it precluded every thing honourable and enlightened. It knows that his government was one of coercion and disunion; that, had he lived longer, and kept his measures unchanged, the bayonet must have displaced the constable's staff in our manufacturing counties; we must have been dragooned by a standing army*."

It soon became evident that under Mr. Canning there was a change in the domestic and foreign policy of the government. On questions of domestic policy he was no longer trammelled by antiquated precedents, or depressed by the scowl which forbade the slightest approach to innovation. His speech on the silk trade, in the following passage, contains a clear exposition of the principle which actuated him in all his measures.

"Why is it to be supposed that the application of philosophy (for I will use that odious word)—why is it to be supposed, that to apply the refinement of philosophy to the affairs of common life, indicates obduracy of feeling or obtuseness of sensibility? We must deal with the affairs of men on abstract principles, modified, of course, according to times and circumstances. Is not the doctrine and spirit of those who persecute my right hon. friend the same which, in former times, stirred up persecution against the best benefactors of mankind? Is it not the same doctrine and spirit which embittered the life of Turgot? (Cheers.) Is it not a doctrine and spirit such as these which consigned Galileo to the dungeons of the Inquisition? (Cheers.) Is it not a doctrine and a spirit such as these which have at all times been at work to roll back the tide of civilization—a doctrine and a spirit actuating little minds, who, incapable of reaching the heights from which alone extended views of human nature can be taken, console and revenge themselves by calumniating and misrepresenting those who have toiled to those

* The New Monthly Magazine, for Sept. 1827, page 276.

heights for the advantage of mankind. (Cheers.) Sir, I have not to learn that there is a faction in the country—I mean not a political faction—I should, perhaps, rather have said, a sect, small in number and powerless in might, who think that all advances towards improvement are retrogradations towards Jacobinism. These persons seem to imagine, that under no possible circumstances can an honest man endeavour to keep his country upon a line with the progress of political knowledge, and to adapt its course to the varying circumstances of the world. Such an attempt is branded as an indication of mischievous intentions, as evidence of a design to sap the foundations of the greatness of the country. Sir, I consider it to be the duty of a British statesman, in internal as well as external affairs, to hold a middle course between extremes; avoiding alike the extravagance of despotism, or the licentiousness of unbridled freedom; reconciling power with liberty; not adopting hasty or ill-advised experiments, or pursuing any airy and unsubstantial theories; but not rejecting, nevertheless, the application of sound and wholesome knowledge to practical affairs; and pressing, with sobriety and caution, into the service of his country, every generous and liberal principle, whose excess, indeed, may be dangerous, but whose foundation is in truth."

This is vague, it may be said, but vagueness of a very different description from that which had long been fashionable among tory statesmen. "The progress of political knowledge," "Turgot," "Galileo," "liberal principles," are names and phrases which would not have been, a few years ago, found in the speech of a minister.

The twelve years which have elapsed since the conclusion of the war against France have prepared a great change, or rather restoration, of opinion in the country. Previously to the French revolution, the tendency of this country decidedly was towards political improvement. The minister, a declared friend to parliamentary reform, practised severe economy in

the expenditure, meditated an improvement in the church establishment, and a commutation of tithes, or other extensive plans of amelioration. Some followed, others outran him, but no very marked difference of opinion existed. A friendly feeling also prevailed towards all improvements in the political condition of other nations. The French revolution entirely changed this state of things. The minds of some men were exalted, but of more, and those of the most influential, terrified. A few men meditated revolutions; but it became the fashion to hate changes, to stand still, or if to move at all, to go back was the chief merit of a statesman; and any attempt at innovation in any part of the world, no matter how provoked or justified, was viewed with undisguised horror. But this condition of the mind of a large portion of the public, in a country where discussion was free, could not long outlive the terror which gave rise to it. Since the peace, the nation has gradually reverted to the same position in which it stood previously to the war; the objects to which its attention are turned are different, but the temper is similar. Many of the remaining members of the Pitt party have not accommodated themselves to this change of circumstances. The cant, the catch words of the time of the revolutionary war have stuck by them; they talk of Pitt's principles, meaning thereby the expedients he adopted against dangers, the very imagination of which has passed away. They praise Pitt's actions, without reference to the circumstances in which he was placed, and, like Panurge's sheep, would follow the precedent of the bell-wether in jumping into the sea, not recollecting that their great leader did not go in, but was

thrust in. Mr. Canning had the sense to see that the time for this folly was going by; that nothing is so hopeless as the attempt to keep up the humbug alarm at the danger of innovation, which never perhaps had any foundation in fact, but which has now lost all its foundation in imagination; that the dangers to be avoided in the time of Robespierre were different from those to be avoided in the time of Ferdinand of Spain.

The chief characteristic of his foreign policy, as has been well observed, was his studious dissent from the holy alliance, a fearless frankness in declaring the truth, both to the governments and nations on the continent, and an evident desire to alienate the former from this country without disturbing the peace of Europe. "His language," says the same writer, "on questions of foreign policy, has been that of dissent from the principles of the continental monarchs; forcible, as every thing he says is forcible, but not stronger than the occasion has warranted." It is really the privilege and the duty of the statesmen of this country to speak out. Their privilege, because they have rights, as citizens, which they do not sink by the acceptance of office; their duty, because, being accountable to parliament, they ought to address that body without disguise. This Mr. Canning uniformly did. He spoke without any of the cant of diplomacy. His wisdom, as Lord Bacon says of the ancient mythology, was either great or happy: great, if he intended to rally round England the affections of the world; happy, if he, intending nothing less, has been led, by his temper and his genius, to such a result.

The year 1823 was ushered in by meetings, in town and country, on the subject of parliamentary reform.

This spirit communicated itself to parliament. The agricultural distress, and the incessant applications for a reduction in the national expenditure, kept Mr. Canning in perpetual action. He was constantly answering questions, soothing irritation, or conciliating enmity; while, at the same time, on "his temper and talents," as Mr. Huskisson well observed to the Liverpool electors, "devolved the task of guiding and repelling the elements of strife from the country, and, if possible, from Europe."

When the hostile armies of France entered the Peninsula, and invaded Spain, the aggression was deemed so great a violation of the law of nations, so likely to destroy the balance of power in Europe, and especially to affect the interests of Great Britain, that some of the most enlightened men in the kingdom, both in parliament and out of it, called loudly upon the government to put itself in a menacing attitude; and if not absolutely to unsheath the sword, yet, to threaten the invaders with summary vengeance if they did not immediately abandon their atrocious project. Though a greater calumny could not have been uttered than that published by the French minister, M. de Chateaubriand, that the English ministry *sanctioned* the invasion of Spain, it is certain that it formed no part of their policy to plunge into a war to prevent its further progress, or to punish the invaders. At least they did not think that, either on the principle of honour, or on the plea of necessity, they could then be justified in disturbing the peace of Europe. On the 18th of March, Mr. Canning, who was then severely afflicted with the gout, left his sick bed to attend the house. He then observed:

"I should deceive the house, were I now to state, that I cling to any rational hope of averting a war between France and Spain; indeed, it is incumbent upon me to admit, that the hope of averting this calamity, which his majesty's government had previously cherished, is, if not totally extinguished, at least very remote, and receding fast from our view. On as early a day as my personal convenience will possibly admit, it is my intention to place upon the table of the house the papers which relate to the subject; and, on the first convenient day after the recess, I shall take the opportunity of any motion of mere form, and, without presuming to commit the house in any opinion upon the conduct of his majesty's government, both here and in the other house of parliament, to state generally the principles upon which they have acted in the present crisis; of course taking care to allow the fullest information before parliament are called upon to express any opinion upon their policy."

On the 14th of April, Mr. Canning laid the correspondence before the house, and called its attention to the question at large. He commenced by quoting a portion of the instructions he had given to the Duke of Wellington, who quitted London for Paris forty-eight hours after Mr. Canning's appointment as foreign secretary. The letter was published in the correspondence, and the extract Mr. Canning alluded to is as follows:

"If there be a determined project to interfere, by force or menace, in the present struggle in Spain, so convinced are his majesty's government of the uselessness and danger of any such interference—so objectionable does it appear to them in principle, as well as utterly impracticable in execution—that, when the necessity arises, or, I would rather say, when the opportunity offers, I am to instruct your grace, at once, frankly and peremptorily to declare, that, to any such interference, *come what may, his majesty will never be a party.*"

Mr. Canning then went through the correspondence,

and clearly explained the motives and policy of each letter; saying that his first thought had throughout been to secure the interests and peace of Great Britain. Our duty to the Portuguese he thus clearly elucidated:

"There is much misconstruction in the country upon this subject. It is not only asserted that our connexions with Portugal impose on us the necessity (as they certainly do) of flying to her assistance, if she is attacked; but it is also asserted, that they leave the question of whether Great Britain should go to war, or remain at peace, entirely in the keeping of Portugal.

"I admit our pledge of defence to Portugal, on the ground of a defensive, not an offensive, treaty; and, if there is one point in the law of nations more clear than another, it is this: that a defensive alliance between two states does not commit one of them to war, when that war is *voluntarily* commenced by the other.

"France has declared to Portugal, that it is not its intention to meddle with her, either in word or deed, unless Portugal interferes with, or attacks, the armies of France. Up to this moment, Portugal is not bound by any engagement to enter into the war. I am not stating her policy, but her obligations. Portugal is not bound by treaty to enter into the war; therefore, if Portugal joins Spain in her endeavours to repel France from the Peninsula, there is no ground for Great Britain to put forward a single soldier in support of Portugal. I am not stating what our policy may be, but what is required by the treaties. England is bound to protect Portugal, if Portugal be attacked; but not if Portugal attacks others."

* * *

"Strong differences of opinion have existed, and do still exist, with regard to the propriety of our observing a strict neutrality in the impending contest. Many individuals think the invasion of Spain by France ought to be considered by England as a declaration of war against herself. That opinion is held by many persons of the first rank and the utmost respectability in the state; but that opinion cannot receive any support from either justice or the policy of the state. I do not mean to say, that such a war would be absolutely unjust on our part; but that

there is no adequate ground on which we can be called to interfere in it. War, in the responsibility of those who have to make it, ought to be well and duly weighed, before it is resolved on. The cause for it should not merely be sufficient, but urgent; and not merely urgent, but absolutely consistent with the interest and welfare of the country which first declares it.

"In making these observations, do I cast any blame upon those who, seeing a strong and powerful nation eager to crush and overwhelm with its vengeance a less numerous, but not less gallant, people, are anxious to join the weaker against the stronger party? Certainly not. The feeling is highly honourable to those who entertain it. The bosoms in which it exists, in full bloom and vigour, unchastened and unalloyed by any other feeling, are much more happy than those in which that feeling is chastened, tempered, and mitigated, by the considerations of prudence, interest, and expediency. I know and envy the feelings of those who call for war, for the issue of which *they* are in no wise likely to be responsible."

* * *

"I have heard that there are some persons who think, that though it may not be prudent to make war, it might be prudent to menace war against France, upon this account. These individuals I conceive to be guilty of an error in principle. *The country which menaces war ought always to be ready to carry those menaces into execution.* There are other individuals who are guilty of an error of a different kind. I mean an error of opinion. They think this country should immediately send forth a maritime armament, to watch the events that may occur on the shores of the Peninsula. Such a course, in my humble opinion, would be unworthy a great and independent nation like our own, and would degrade it from a first to a secondary power. I do hope, whenever this country determines upon war, it will wage it, *not* as an *auxiliary*, but as a principal. Such has hitherto been its policy; and, on all former occasions, when it has resorted to war, it has exerted every nerve to bring it to a safe, a speedy, and an honourable conclusion. *Toto certatum est corpore regni.* This, I contend, is the only sound view in which war can be contemplated; and I differ entirely from those who consider the subject in any other manner. If war is the issue,

it should be a war worthy of this great country; and there is no war in which this country can be engaged at the present moment, and under the existing circumstances of Europe, unless she puts forth all her energies, all her power, all her strength, and determines to succeed or perish in the contest.

"'The determination of the government is for neutrality—but for what neutrality? The house will give me leave to say—for an honest and real neutrality. Any other would be unworthy of the nation. The choice is between neutrality and war. If we mean war, let us openly choose it; but if we mean neutrality, let it not be neutrality under the mask of non-interference with one party, whilst a covert support is given to the other. If, gentlemen, you ask me what are the lines, rules, and limits of a just neutrality, I will tell you them in one word. There is a golden maxim, which applies as well to politics as to morals—'Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you.' But to England I say—'Do unto others what *you have made* others do unto you.'"

* * *

This lucid and convincing speech Mr. Canning concluded in these words:

"The promise of actual and efficient support to Spain, this country was not prepared to give; and the case ministers had to consider was this, whether they should withdraw from the question altogether, and treat it with perfect indifference? Indifference we can never feel towards the affairs of Spain: and I earnestly hope and trust, that she may come triumphantly out of the struggle. But I should not speak truly, if I did not say, that I am perfectly convinced, the first result of her success and pacification must be, the adoption of those alterations in her system which we have recommended. But, whether Spain or France is successful, I shall ever feel a perfect conviction, in considering the extent of misery which may be occasioned by the contest, that if Spain had given way in a slight degree on the one part, and the army of observation had been withdrawn on the other, any unpleasant feeling would have been swallowed up and lost sight of, in the immensity of the benefit which would have been produced. They would not now have to de-

plore that state of warfare, the risk of which is incalculably great, and the issue of which it is impossible to foresee."

On another occasion he observed:

"Gentlemen say, we must be drawn into a war, sooner or later. Why then, I answer, let it be *later*. If we are to be drawn into a war, let us be drawn into it on grounds truly honourable, truly British. I do not say (God forbid I should!) that it is no part of the duty of Great Britain to protect what is termed the balance of power, and to aid the weak against the strong. I say, on the contrary, that such is her bounden duty; but I affirm also, that we must take care to do our duty to ourselves. The first condition of engaging in any war is, that the war must be just; the second, that, being just in itself, we can also with justice engage in it; and the third, that, being just in its nature, and it being possible for us justly to embark in it, we can so interfere without detriment or prejudice to ourselves. I contend that he is a visionary politician who leaves this condition out of the question; and I say farther, that though the glorious abandonment of it may sound well, in the generous speech of an *irresponsible* orator—with the safety of a country on his lips, and none of the responsibility on his shoulders—it is matter deeply to be considered."

On the 18th of April, the intemperance of party feeling had nearly hurried Mr. Canning into another duel. Mr. Brougham, in the course of his speech, founded on the petition of certain protestant clergymen, made an illiberal and personal attack on Mr. Canning. He ventured to say, "that he had exhibited the most incredible specimen of monstrous truckling, for the purpose of obtaining office, which the whole history of political tergiversation could furnish."

Mr. Canning. "I rise to say that is false!"

A deep silence followed this. Mr. Brougham sat down, and the speaker rose. A long and animated discussion was the consequence. A motion was made,

that "the serjeant-at-arms should take both into custody;" but, after mutual explanations, both the gentlemen agreed to "think no more of the matter."

In the August of this year, Mr. Canning, having resigned his seat for Liverpool, accompanied Mr. Huskisson, his friend and successor, on a visit to his former constituents. At the invitation of the committee of the St. George Steam Packet Company, he took an aquatic excursion on board the Emerald Isle steam packet. Her decks were crowded by upwards of three hundred of the most respectable gentlemen and merchants of the town, comprising men of all political parties, who had been invited to meet the right honourable secretary and Mr. Huskisson. In the evening, in the town-hall, where the mayor entertained a party of about eighty noblemen and gentlemen, on his health being given, Mr. Canning rose and said:

"He could not, in rising to return his thanks for the very flattering manner in which the last toast had been received, confine himself strictly to the expression of his sincere gratitude; nor sit down without renewing the assurance he had already given, of his readiness, at all times, to serve, to the best of his ability, that important and enlightened community which it had for ten years been his pleasure and his pride to represent. That assurance had been given at the period when events, which he could not control, rendered it necessary for him to suggest a separation most painful to his feelings, and which nothing but an imperative sense of duty could have compelled him to propose. He hardly knew whether he felt more grateful to them for the cordiality with which they had originally invited him to their service, or for the generous, though reluctant, acquiescence with which they had been kind enough to admit the necessity of parting. The parting, however, was only in form; in substance he remained still their friend and their servant: their friend, with undiminished attachments; their servant, with no

other diminution of exertion than necessarily resulted from the overwhelming nature of his other occupations. He must not omit to express the gratification which he felt, and which the sight of the present assembly was peculiarly calculated to heighten and illustrate—the gratification, he meant, of believing, that whatever might have been the insignificance of his services, the course of his elections for Liverpool had not been unuseful. They had exhibited a series of animated contests and prompt reconciliations; of enmities transitory as the struggle which gave them birth; and of acquaintances and connexions which, he trusted, would long survive the memory of those contests. He had seen the town in all the agitation of conflict, without experiencing or witnessing any thing which it was painful to him to recollect; and he had received proofs in the course of the day (many who heard him would understand to what he alluded, though he could not in delicacy particularize them) how much of mutual personal esteem may grow up amid the conflicts of political hostility. The temper in which he left Liverpool was that in which he rejoiced now to see it; in which, he hoped, it would long continue; and which the merits of his successor were eminently calculated to maintain. He even flattered himself, that, in these respects, the example of his connexion with Liverpool was not entirely lost upon other scenes of political contest; and he flattered himself still further, that the temper which then pervaded the room in which he was speaking, was not an unapt specimen of the general temperance of the country."

In October, we find the right honourable gentleman at Plymouth, where he was greeted with every demonstration of respect and affection. The freedom of the borough was presented to him, on this occasion, in a handsome box, cut out of the Breakwater marble, and richly set in silver*. On receiving this elegant pre-

* It is a whimsical fact that this identical box was seized by an excise officer, as the silver had not received the hall mark, which should have been impressed by the assay-master.

sent, conveying the highest privilege the corporation could bestow, Mr. Canning rose and delivered the annexed characteristic speech, certainly one of his happiest effusions.

" Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,—I accept with thankfulness, and with greater satisfaction than I can express, this flattering testimony of your good opinion and good will. I must add, that the value of the gift itself has been greatly enhanced by the manner in which the worthy and honourable recorder has developed the motives which suggested it, and the sentiments which it is intended to convey.

" Gentlemen, your recorder has said very truly, that whoever, in this free and enlightened state, aims at political eminence, and discharges political duties, must expect to have his conduct scrutinized, and every action of his public life sifted with no ordinary jealousy, and with no sparing criticism; and such may have been my lot as much as that of other public men. But, gentlemen, unmerited obloquy seldom fails of an adequate, though perhaps tardy, compensation. I must think myself, as my honourable friend has said, eminently fortunate if such compensation as he describes has fallen to me at an earlier period than to many others; if I dare flatter myself (as his partiality has flattered me) that the sentiments you are kind enough to entertain for me are in unison with those of the country; if, in addition to the justice done me by my friends, I may, as he has assured me, rely upon a candid construction, even from political opponents.

" But, gentlemen, the secret of such a result does not lie deep. It consists only in an honest and undeviating pursuit of what one conscientiously believes to be one's public duty; a pursuit which, steadily continued, will, however detached and separate parts of a man's conduct may be viewed, under the influence of partialities or prejudices, obtain for it, when considered as a whole, the approbation of all honest and honourable minds. Any man may occasionally be mistaken as to the means most conducive to the end which he has in view; but, if the end be just and praiseworthy, it is by that that he will be ultimately judged, either by his contemporaries, or by posterity.

" Gentlemen, the end which I confess I have always had in

view, and which appears to me the legitimate object of pursuit to a British statesman, I can describe in one word. The language of modern philosophy is wisely and diffusively benevolent; it professes the perfection of our species, and the amelioration of the lot of all mankind. Gentlemen, I hope that my heart beats as high for the general interests of humanity,—I hope that I have as friendly a disposition towards other nations of the earth, as any one who vaunts his philanthropy most highly; but I am contented to confess, that, in the conduct of political affairs, the grand object of my contemplation is the interest of England. (Much applause.)

"Not, gentlemen, that the interest of England is an interest which stands isolated and alone. The situation which she holds forbids an exclusive selfishness. Her prosperity must contribute to the prosperity of other nations, and her stability to the safety of the world. (Bursts of applause.) But, intimately connected as we are with the system of Europe, it does not follow that we are therefore called upon to mix ourselves on every occasion, with a restless and meddling activity, in the concerns of the nations which surround us. It is upon a just balance of conflicting duties, and of rival, but sometimes incomputable, advantages, that a government must judge when to put forth its strength, and when to husband it for occasions yet to come.

"Our ultimate object must be the peace of the world; that object may sometimes be best attained by prompt exertions, sometimes by abstinence from interposition in contests which we cannot prevent. It is upon these principles, that, as has been most truly observed by my worthy friend, it did not appear to the government of this country to be necessary that Great Britain should mingle in the recent contest between France and Spain.

"Your worthy recorder has accurately classed the persons who would have driven us into that contest. There were, undoubtedly, amongst them those who desired to plunge this country into the difficulties of war, partly from the hope that those difficulties would overwhelm the administration; but it would be most unjust not to admit, that there were others who were actuated by nobler principles, and more generous feelings, who would have rushed forward at once, from the sense of

indignation at aggression, and who deemed that no act of injustice could be perpetrated, from one end of the universe to the other, but that the sword of Great Britain should leap from its scabbard to avenge it. But as it is the province of laws to control the excess even of laudable passions and propensities in individuals, so it is the duty of government to restrain within due bounds the ebullition of national sentiment, and to regulate the course and direction of impulses which it cannot blame. Is there any one among the latter class of persons described by my hon. friend (for to the former I have nothing to say) who continues to doubt, whether the government did wisely in declining to obey the precipitate enthusiasm which prevailed at the commencement of the contest in Spain? Is there any body who does not *now* think, that it was the office of the government to examine more closely all the various bearings of so complicated a question? to consider whether they were called upon to assist a united nation, or to plunge themselves into the internal feuds by which that nation was divided? to aid in repelling a foreign invader, or to take part in a civil war? Is there any man who does not now see what would have been the extent of the burdens that would have been cast upon this country? Is there any one who does not acknowledge that, under such circumstances, the enterprise would have been one to be characterized only by a term borrowed from that part of the Spanish literature with which we are most familiar—quixotic; an enterprise romantic in its origin, and thankless in its end?

"But while we thus control even our feelings by our duty, let it not be said, that we cultivate peace either because we fear, or because we are unprepared for war; on the contrary, if eight months ago the government did not hesitate to proclaim, that the country was prepared for war, if war should unfortunately be necessary, every month of peace that has since passed has made us so much the more capable of exertion. The resources created by peace are means of war; in cherishing those resources, we but accumulate those means. Our present repose is no more a proof of our inability to act, than the state of inertness and inactivity in which I have seen those mighty masses that float in the waters above your town, is a proof they are devoid of

strength, and incapable of being fitted for action. You well know, gentlemen, how soon one of those stupendous masses now reposing on their shadows in perfect stillness, how soon, upon any call of patriotism or necessity, it would assume the likeness of an animated thing, instinct with life and motion; how soon it would ruffle, as it were, its swelling plumage; how quickly it would put forth all its beauty and its bravery, collect its scattered elements of strength, and awaken its dormant thunder. (Long and continued thunders of applause.) Such as is one of these magnificent machines, when springing from inaction into a display of its might, such is England herself, while, apparently passive and motionless, she silently concentrates the power to be put forth on an adequate occasion. But God forbid that that occasion should arise! After a war sustained for nearly a quarter of a century, sometimes single-handed, and with all Europe arranged at times against her, or at her side, England needs a period of tranquillity, and may enjoy it without fear of misconstruction. Long may we be enabled, gentlemen, to improve the blessings of our present situation; to cultivate the arts of peace; to give to commerce, now reviving, greater extension and new spheres of employment; and to confirm the prosperity now generally diffused throughout this island. Of the blessings of peace, gentlemen, I trust that this borough, with which I have now the honour and happiness of being associated, will receive an ample share. I trust the time is not far distant, when that noble structure, of which, as I learn from your recorder, the box with which you have honoured me through his hands formed a part, that gigantic barrier against the fury of the waves that roll into your harbour, will protect a commercial marine, not less considerable in its kind than the warlike marine of which your port has been long so distinguished an asylum; when the town of Plymouth will participate in the commercial prosperity as largely as it has hitherto done in the naval glories of England." (The hon. gentleman sat down amidst bursts of cheering, which lasted for several minutes.)

In the June of 1824, the cabinet determined on the recognition of the states of Mexico, Colombia, and

Buenos Ayres. This was a stroke of policy, as well as an act of justice, reflecting the highest honour upon its authors. It is almost praise sufficient to say of this measure, that it was strenuously opposed by Lord Castlereagh, and that it was stayed in its progress for more than three months by the late Lord Chancellor. That Mr. Canning claimed the merit of it we learn from his celebrated speech in relation to Portugal, and that this merit was a little overrated will not be denied even by his warmest admirers. By his friends it is considered as his great exploit. Of the propriety of it there can be no doubt—of its importance a great deal. If it be true, as he affirmed at a subsequent period, that he had called into existence these states, all the credit which he assumes, as the author of a great political change, would be due to him; but he professedly and carefully waited till the states in question had established their independence, before he recognized it; nor did "he afterwards give them the slightest assistance in maintaining it. No doubt, the new states owe much to the assistance of individual Englishmen; but this aid was given long before Mr. Canning's recognition." If Mr. Canning had taken a coach in the street, it would have been too much for him to boast, that his recognition called into existence a vehicle which he would probably have found was built in the time of Queen Anne*.

We regret to notice Mr. Canning's speech on Mr. Brougham's motion respecting the proceedings at Demerara against the missionary Smith. In behalf of this deeply injured individual, whose only crime was, that he devoted his whole life to ameliorate the con-

* London Magazine for May, 1827.

dition of the slave population in Demerara, by enlightening their minds, and soothing their sorrows under the unparalleled miseries which they endured, Mr. Brougham argued, that he could not legally be tried by a court martial; that the court martial, even supposing it possessed any jurisdiction, had exceeded its authority; that every rule of evidence had been most flagrantly violated; that, upon the evidence as it stood, there was clear proof, not of Smith's guilt, but of his innocence; and that, even if it were allowed that he had been guilty of misprision of treason, he could not be condemned capitally for that offence. At the very moment Mr. Brougham was triumphantly establishing every one of these positions, the martyred servant of a crucified Master had breathed his last in a loathsome dungeon, where, loaded with a felon's and a traitor's chains, he sunk beneath the unprovoked cruelty of his oppressors. To shield these legal, or we should say rather, illegal, murderers, from the punishment they so richly merited, Mr. Canning stood up, not indeed as their advocate, but as their apologist; and his apology was of the very worst kind, for it was a laboured attempt to establish the *probability* that Mr. Smith was in possession of the secret of the insurrection, which he refused to disclose. It is not too much to affirm, that Mr. Canning well knew, while he spoke, that the victim of the colonial authorities in Demerara was perfectly innocent. He well knew, for the proceedings of the mock trial were before him, that he did not even merit imprisonment, much less chains, a pestilent dungeon, and an ignominious death. The Annual Register informs us that Mr. Canning resisted the motion, in a temperate and almost suppliant

speech. After expressing his disgust at the publication of the details of Mr. Smith's journal, Mr. Canning proceeds:—"The question that I am now trying is, whether there was that *degree of innocence* in Mr. Smith which calls upon me to condemn his judges; and, in that view of the question, I cannot throw out of my mind the *moral* conviction which the knowledge of Mr. Smith's feelings and opinions, however obtained, is calculated to produce." Good God! is it thus that a British statesman could trifle with the spirit and letter of British law; and this, too, when it involves the character and life of a British subject? Moral conviction!—when was this ever allowed in a criminal case—in any case whatever, to determine the legal guilt of the accused? The judges were self-constituted; they admitted in this case evidence which they discarded in every other; and with this evidence, there was not the shadow of proof to establish the criminality of the prisoner. Yet they condemned him to death. And is it over men like these Mr. Canning could throw the ægis of his omnipotent protection? And was it a sufficient atonement to insulted justice, that, after a long and elaborate piece of special pleading against an innocent victim of a merciless persecution, to put in the saving clause of pity for the sufferer? "I lament," he added, "many parts of his trial, and most deeply do I deplore his fate; but I do not see in the proceedings that have been had against him, either, on the one hand, that entire exculpation which entitles Mr. Smith to the glory of martyrdom, or that proof of *malus animus*, on the part of his judges, which ought to subject them to such a sentence as the resolutions proposed to us imply." And so the mission-

ary of Christianity perished, unavenged on earth: whether his accusing spirit, pleading beneath the altar, shall remain for ever unappeased, is more than we can tell.

Scarcely had the recognition of the independence of the new American states by Great Britain been announced to the world, when a remonstrance was presented to our government from the Spanish minister. The reply of the foreign secretary showed that a new era had dawned in diplomacy. It was a perfect contrast to that of M. Zea, which was in the quibbling, cunning, overreaching, and confused manner of the old school of such writings. That of Mr. Canning was forcibly written, clear as to the points at issue: instead of office forms and dry half-meaning sentences, it was distinguished for vigour of style, and open, manly reasoning, consonant to the elevation of his office, to the intellect of his country, and the established opinion of his own powers.

Mr. Canning manfully acknowledges all that took place between Great Britain and the government of France under a directory, a consulate, and an emperor, in reply to M. Zea's implications of England's not having so negociated. He alludes to Mr. Fox's correspondence, in 1806, with the then minister, Talleyrand, and the subsequent overtures, in 1808 and 1814, which recognized Napoleon's government, and only failed because Spain was not admitted as a contracting party. He exposes the flattery of the Spanish diplomatists, and exhibits Charles and Ferdinand as worshippers of the imperial crown. He states that the restoration of their relatives, the French

Bourbons, was a subject of more than doubt in the camp of the allies; and afterwards says:—

"The example of the last revolution of France, and of the happy re-establishment of Louis XVIII. on his throne, is cited by M. Zea, in support of the principle of the imprescriptible rights of a legitimate sovereign, and the obligation of all foreign powers to respect those rights; and, in consequence, this minister invites England to act consistently; and, in its conduct towards the new states of Spanish America, to observe the same reserve as was exhibited, in a manner so honourable to her, towards revolutionary France. But it is necessary to recal to the recollection of M. Zea, that all the powers of Europe, and particularly Spain, one of the first, not only acknowledges the different governments *de facto*, which deprived the Bourbons of the throne of France, and which afterwards kept that family at a distance from it for twenty-five years; but that Spain, besides, concluded strict alliances with them, and, above all, with the one which M. Zea justly designates as a government *de facto* in the strictest sense—that of Buonaparte; against whom his unrestrained ambition, and not a principle of respect for the rights of legitimate monarchy, had armed all the powers of Europe. It is useless to attempt to give another colour to facts which have already been displayed in the page of history; and the undersigned is, in consequence, obliged to add, that Great Britain cannot, in justice to herself, accept the eulogium which M. Zea bestows on her in this respect; nor can she pretend to except herself from the general accusation of having negociated with the chiefs of the French revolution. It is true, that in 1796 England abstained from treating with revolutionary France, long after the powers of Europe had given it the example. But the causes of this reserve, alleged in parliament, and in different documents, was the subordinate state of the French government; and it cannot be denied, that Great Britain twice, viz. in 1796 and 1797, opened negociations for peace with the French directory, which, if they had succeeded, would have led to a recognition of that form of government. In 1801 peace was concluded with the consulate; and if in 1806 peace was not

actually concluded with Buonaparte, then emperor of France, the negociation was only broken off by one condition; and if in 1808 and 1814 England refused to listen to any overture on the part of France, she did it solely because Buonaparte refused to admit Spain as a contracting party in the negociation. Moreover, it cannot be denied, that even in 1814 Great Britain would have made peace with Buonaparte, if he had not been so immoderate in his pretensions; and Spain cannot be ignorant, that, even since the fall of Buonaparte, it was a question among the allies, whether it would be proper to place on the throne of France a sovereign who was not a Bourbon. The appeal, therefore, to the conduct of the powers of Europe and to Great Britain, with respect to the French revolution, only serves to recal abundant examples of the recognition of governments *de facto* by Great Britain, which in this respect was always more tardy than the other powers of Europe, and especially Spain, which gave them the example. In the note of M. Zea are two other points which demand particular remark. M. Zea says, that the king of Spain will never recognise the new states of Spanish America, and that his majesty will not cease to employ force of arms against his rebel subjects in that part of the world. We have neither the pretensions nor the desire to control the conduct of his catholic majesty; but this declaration of M. Zea is a complete justification of our conduct, as it proves that we have seized the proper moment to put our relations with the new states on a firm footing. A further delay on our part could not have satisfied Spain, or produced any benefit, seeing that Spain has decidedly pronounced herself against all arrangement, under any circumstances, or at any time; and that she is resolved on interminable war with her ancient colonies."

At the close of the following year, 1825, the spirit of commercial speculation, like a mighty bubble, burst upon the heads of the thousands who had been its willing and infatuated dupes. It is foreign from our purpose to enter into the causes which combined to create a universal panic, which, in a moment, destroyed all credit, and threatened the nation with universal

bankruptcy. Attempts having been made to implicate the government in some measure as the authors of the calamity, Mr. Canning repelled the insinuation.

"An honourable gentleman, who spoke early in the debate, made, among a variety of remarks, one which I cannot allow to remain unnoticed. 'He thought that the ministers were extremely culpable for not discouraging the wild spirit of speculation which had contributed so much to the present crisis of distress; and that they were wanting in their duty, because, when the various schemes of last year were discussed, they did not attend in their places, to give a detailed opposition to every one of them.' It appears to me to be a convenient and seemly rule, that those whose duty it is to attend to the public business of the country should abstain from taking an active part in the consideration of any measure which merely affects individual interests. For myself, I have always endeavoured to act by this rule. I have never given a vote on any private business since I became a minister; and I believe the same rule has been followed by all my colleagues in administration. It appears to me, that such is the safe and seemly rule of conduct; because, if I could reconcile it to my sense of duty to break through it in one instance, I might be induced to break through it in more: and a practice might thus grow up, from which many suspicions might arise, unjust and unfounded, as they would be at present, but still impossible to be entirely avoided. But has there been no warning given to the country on the part of ministers? Has there been no opportunity, during the fever which existed last year in the public mind, in which the king's government had declared, that they would not advance a farthing to the aid of any difficulties which might ensue from excessive speculation? I might here, as on a matter of history, allude to what had occurred on a former occasion in another place. One of his majesty's ministers—I mean my noble friend at the head of the treasury—speaking as the organ of that department of the state, and also in his capacity as a member of the government, took an opportunity, early in March last, not five weeks after the commencement of the session, and before one single bill had passed, to hold out to all who were engaged in those

speculations, that they were running wildly into them; that it was the essence of a free government not to interpose any legislative let or hindrance to the current of individual enterprise and industry; that those who entered wildly into extravagant speculations, did so upon their own risk and responsibility; and that it was the fixed resolution of his majesty's government not to extend any pecuniary assistance to the difficulties which were likely to arise out of them. As far as the voice of government could be heard, it was heard through the country."

Mr. Canning, on other nights of discussion, entered into the question of currency, and pursued the details of its effects and variation with astonishing minuteness. The subject, though one entirely unconnected with his department, was treated by him in a more masterly manner than by those (with one exception) upon whom the *onus* of suggesting a remedy seemed to rest. Mr. Canning, in one of his speeches, objecting to the issue of very small notes, quoted from a letter (the only one, he said,) he had received from Burke, which contained this passage:—"Tell Mr. Pitt not to issue one pound notes, for if he does, he will never see a guinea again." "Burke," continued our hero, "was a great politician; this letter shows that he was no ordinary prophet." This speech is too much interwoven with calculations and replies to find a place here; but the concluding words of it were as follow:—"It was the wish of the most favoured monarch of France, that he could see every peasant in his realm have a fowl in his pot on a Sunday. The measure before the house will, at least, do so much towards realising that wish for the peasantry of England, it will ensure them the possession of their fowl, after they have earned it. The poor man will at least be certain, at the end of his week's toil, not to find

himself with a piece of paper in his hands, for which he can obtain no value, but to receive the value of his labour, be it great or small—the real payment, which he has exerted himself to gain."

In the debate on the question of negro slavery, which took place in the March of 1826, we regret to perceive the minister get the better of the man, and the spectres of colonial interest scaring the once eloquent advocate of abolition from his propriety. We feel with Mr. Pitt, that it is the very death of justice to utter a syllable in support of the trade in human beings; and if the traffic be so abominable, can they be innocent who retain their wicked purchase? We, therefore, do not read with pleasure such language as the following from the lips of any man; it lowers the fine tone of sentiment, which, with the enthusiasm it enkindles, is absolutely necessary to break the chains of the slave. We have no objection to arrangements, to compensations, to sacrifices; but we do deprecate one hour's delay. Let the whole nation move. By all means let justice be done; but let man made in the image of God, and bound to all his kind by the sympathies of our common nature, be free. It is the grossest libel against Christianity to maintain, that where it has the power to remedy human ill, it is reluctant to use it, and that its profession can, in any sense, be compatible with the existence of such slavery as prevails in the West Indies. That Christianity and slavery have existed together we sorrowfully admit: but let not Christianity incur the censure. We wonder that Mr. Canning should have pressed for delay and remedial steps, with his arguments for immediate abolition of the slave trade fresh in his recollection, and

with the eloquence of his "*Magnus Apollo*" sounding in his ears. "I know," said Mr. Pitt, "the difficulty that exists in attempting to reform long established abuses; and I know the danger arising from the arguments in favour of delay, in the case of evils which nevertheless are thought too enormous to be borne, when considered as perpetual. But, by proposing some other period than the present, by prescribing some condition, by waiting for some contingency, or by refusing to proceed till a thousand favourable circumstances unite together—perhaps till we gain the general concurrence of Europe—a concurrence which, I believe, never yet took place at the commencement of any one improvement in policy or in morals, year after year escapes, and the most enormous evils go unredressed. We see this abundantly exemplified, not only in public, but in private life. Similar observations have been often applied to the case of personal reformation. If you go into the street, it is a chance but the first person who crosses you is one 'vivendi recte qui prorogat horam!' We may wait, we may delay to cross the stream before us, till it has run down; but we shall wait for ever; for the river will still flow on, without being exhausted*. We shall be no nearer to the object which we profess to have in view, so long as the step which can alone bring us to it is not taken. Until the actual, the only remedy is applied, we ought not to flatter ourselves, either that we have as yet thoroughly laid to heart the evil we

* "Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis, at ille
Labitur, et labetur in omne volubilis ævum."

HORACE.

affect to deplore, or that there is as yet any reasonable assurance of its being brought to an actual termination." Such was Mr. Pitt's appeal to the house of commons for immediate abolition. We have lived sufficiently long to know that, without manumission, abolition will continue but a name. While there are slaves, there will be a trade in them equal to the demands of the market. Let us now hear Mr. Canning. Mr. Brougham was for emancipation, even by compulsory measures. Mr. Canning, in reply, said:

"By the resolutions of 1823, parliament pledged itself to abide by a system, not of force, but of conciliation; unless in the event of such a spirit of resistance and contumacy as I trust it will not have to encounter. The honourable gentleman would throw all the weight of the desired alteration upon the shoulders of this country, and cut away all chance of co-operation on the part of the colonists. The question is not, how far the proposed measure in the abstract is right; but how far, subject to existing circumstances, it is either just or expedient; and if any persons think fit now to stand upon the doctrine,—to discuss the single question,—how far can man be rightly the property of man? and maintain that this is sufficient—I answer such persons, that, however proof they may be in the fancied security of their abstract position, they neither argue like members of a British house of parliament, nor like members of a great and civilized society. Unpleasant as it is for me to be compelled to advert to speeches or opinions formerly delivered by me in this house, it is yet imperative upon me to remove an impression which may have been created in the minds of honourable members, by something which has fallen, at least inaccurately, from the honourable and learned member opposite. No doubt I have uttered the words in a former debate upon the subject before the house, 'that the spirit of the British constitution is necessarily hostile to any modification of slavery.' No doubt I uttered these words; but is it fair to take them without reference

to the declaration (in the same speech) by which they were followed: 'That the British constitution had, for years, sanctioned, and even fostered, a colonial system, in which slavery, as every man must be aware, formed of necessity a principal ingredient.' For the fact is, and it is impossible to deny it, that by whatever judicial blindness, by whatever immaturity of perception, this country, with all the freedom of her boasted constitution, has actually encouraged—actually founded—a system in her colonies, to the sustenance of which, not merely the existence of slavery, but the manual influence of it—a black stygean stream of it constantly pouring in—was absolutely necessary.

"I cannot hold, as an unqualified position, that slavery is incompatible with the spirit of the British constitution, when I see that, in the very brightest periods of this free constitution, a system of slavery has not only been tolerated and defended, but set up. To similar assertions, that slavery cannot be tolerated under the existence of the christian religion, I am equally unable to give my unqualified assent; for if such is the case, there not only has been deep crime, but there is crime in the course which parliament even at this moment is pursuing. If that unqualified statement be true, a christian country like England has no choice. We ought, at one blow, to put an end to the system upon which we are now debating. We ought not to talk of such a horror, but on the instant destroy it. It is a thing not to be argued on, but to be universally execrated, upon which (with reference to measures to be taken in the next session) the house are now debating. But it is impossible, whatever may be men's wishes or feelings, it is impossible to maintain, for a moment, that slavery and the christian religion are incapable of existing together. They do exist together—they have existed together, from the very first dawning of Christianity—they have existed together down to the present time. The spirit of that religion—Christianity—is to tame the proud, and to assist the lowly; but it does not do that by sudden changes—by the destruction of existing systems—by revolutions of danger and of blood. It mounts to the throne of all the Cæsars—it can comfort the poor captive in his cell—but it has been preached, although its existence was incompatible with slavery, it has been

preached in the streets of *ancient* Rome, at a time when *Servi cruciantur* was the ordinary process of the forum. Repugnant as slavery is, both to the christian religion and the spirit of the British constitution, British parliaments have concurred, for years, in fostering and aiding that very system which the better feeling of the house now looks upon with horror. How shall we deal with such a system? Shall we continue it? No. But having been all of us, the whole country, involved in the guilt, and sharers in the profit of it, we cannot now turn round upon a part, and say to them, 'You alone shall expiate the crime.'"

* * *

"Mr. Canning said, that the differences between himself and Messrs. Brougham and Denman was in manner or method only. 'In principle,' continued Mr. Canning, 'we are nearly agreed. Some persons there are, who are always ready to run a risk, for the sake of arriving suddenly at their object; others, and of these I am one, are content to risk some slight retardment, for the purpose of arriving at it safely.'"

* * *

"Neither the tenets of the christian religion, nor the spirit of the British constitution, call upon parliament to abolish slavery, at the risk of public safety or private wrong."

In the autumn of this year Mr. Canning visited Paris. He was received by all ranks with the most marked attention. Court etiquette was dispensed with in his favour; and a plebeian, to use the language of a Parisian paper, who had no other title than that of being a great orator, a skilful statesman, and an eloquent proclaimer of civil, commercial, and religious liberty, had the honour to sit at the king's table. "This morning," said the same organ of intelligence, "Mr. Canning breakfasted at St. Ouen, with one of our principal manufacturers; and this evening he had the honour to dine at the Thuilleries, with the king and

royal family." Had Mr. Canning a political object in his Parisian visit? The treaty with France and Russia, and the events at Navarino, seem to throw some light on the mystery, which at the time was so perplexing to the politicians of both countries.

The war that the English ministry were so anxious to prevent, at the close of this year, seemed to lower with a portentous gloom over this country and Europe. Ferdinand, always weak and perfidious, was too unequivocally committing aggressions upon Portugal to have his views and intentions mistaken. This state of affairs induced his majesty, on the 11th of December, to send down a message to the house, stating, that he had received an earnest application from the Princess Regent of Portugal, claiming, in virtue of the ancient obligations of alliance and amity subsisting between his majesty and the crown of Portugal, his majesty's aid against an hostile aggression from Spain.

Mr. Canning's speech, as actually spoken, occasioned by this message, we shall insert in our pages. The sun that was so soon and so suddenly to go down was now at its meridian, and we take leave of it at the moment when it shone forth in all the majesty of its strength.

The order of the day having been read, Mr. Secretary Canning rose, and spoke to the following effect:

"Sir, in proposing, as I shall presently have occasion to do, to the house of commons, to acknowledge his majesty's most gracious message, on the subject of the relations subsisting between Great Britain and Portugal, and the present condition of the latter state; and, in calling on this house to reply to that communication, in terms which will be, in fact, an echo to the

sentiments contained in the royal message, and equally in accordance with the anticipations of his majesty's government—in doing this, sir, I cannot but feel that, however confident I may be in the justice of the cause, and clear as to the policy which it becomes us, in accordance with the recommendations contained in his majesty's message, to adopt; yet, sir, I am free to admit, it well becomes a British minister, in recommending a British house of commons to take any step calculated to bring upon their country the hazards of war, to make use of the language of regret and sorrow that such a necessity should exist. (Hear.) Sir, I assure the house there is not, within its walls, at this moment, any set of men more fully convinced than are his majesty's ministers—or any individual more completely convinced than is he who has now the honour to address it—of the great and vital importance of maintaining, undisturbed, the peace and tranquillity of this country. (Loud cheering.) This, I admit. Indeed, so strongly am I impressed with the truth of this fact, and that for reasons which I shall take the liberty before I sit down to adduce to the house, that I am perfectly ready to declare no question, involving a doubtful success or construction—no consideration of merely present advantage—and, sir, I will go farther, and add, no anticipation of remote and contingent difficulty could arise, which I should not a thousand times rather completely pass over, or, at the utmost, adjourn, than concur in a measure, calling on the government of this country to involve itself in the consequences of a war. But, sir, there are cases which render the adoption of such a course not merely honourable and beneficial, but also necessary and inevitable (hear), and I am equally certain the present occasion presents such a case; and I feel that what has been acted on in the best times of our history—what has been promulgated by our best statesmen—and what has always received the support and concurrence of successive English parliaments, is an adherence to national faith, and respect for the national honour. (Cheers.) These are the two questions which cannot be compromised under any circumstances whatsoever—the cause of national faith, and the cause of national honour. (Hear.) Sir, if I did not consider the present question as completely falling within both these cases—if I was not intimately satisfied, that the national

faith and the national honour were alike interested on this occasion—I should not dare to address the house of commons, as I now do, in the full and unlimited confidence (almost amounting to conviction) that the most gracious communication made to parliament by his majesty, will meet with that reply from parliament which his majesty expects. Viewing the matter as I do, I shall beg leave to proceed, first, to a simple statement and review of facts; in order the better to bring the case under the cognizance of parliament, in the shortest and clearest form I can devise, and of which the subject itself is susceptible. Before entering into the consideration of any collateral circumstances connected with the subject, I shall state shortly the situation of the case, which, as it appears to me, resolves itself into a case of national law, and a question of fact. With regard to the fact, on the one hand, that is now to be brought under the consideration of parliament, as it has previously been submitted to the attention of his majesty's government; sir, in my mind it is impossible to consider that fact in any other light than that in which it presented itself to the minds of his majesty's ministers; and I think it equally impossible for parliament and government (taking such a view of the case) to come to any other decision than that contemplated in his majesty's message. Among the relations of alliance and amity by which, at different periods of her history, this country has connected herself with the other nations of Europe, there exist no treaties so old in their date—none so constant in their duration—and, I may add, not one so precise in the obligations it imposes upon both countries, and so intimately interwoven with the line of policy adopted by Great Britain in its foreign relations, as are the treaties of amity and alliance formed between this country and the kingdom of Portugal. Sir, I may be excused for calling the attention of the house to the fact, that our most remote history contains (I may add, the most brilliant periods of our history are those which contain) notices of the treaties of alliance, amity, and guarantee, subsisting between the king of Great Britain and his Portuguese majesty. The good understanding thus created between the two countries began early, and has continued long. It has survived a variety of conflicting interests and circumstances, which, in the course of events, from

time to time, have naturally and unavoidably arisen. It is much older than the epoch to which I am about to advert, when the good understanding previously subsisting between the two states acquired fresh vigour on the occasion of the present family of Portugal ascending the throne of that kingdom. From the period when the house of Braganza was placed at the head of the monarchy of Portugal, friendly relations have subsisted between that family and the reigning one in this country—relations which were continued without interruption, and renewed with sincerity, on, I will say, both parts. It has been adhered to in periods when the faith of other alliances has been shaken; it has been vindicated in those fields of blood and glory which remain among the most brilliant pages of the history of England. (Hear, hear.) Sir, in that alliance we have always been scrupulously faithful. Sometimes, I admit, we have found the treaty burthensome to maintain—of that there can be no question; and many are those who may have wished us to shake it off, and free ourselves from the incumbrance of observing it; but a feeling of national honour, and what I may be allowed to denominate a sentiment of national sympathy, joined to a common interest, and a cause identified with that country, has induced England to persevere, unterrified by the difficulties attendant upon a continuance of the relations subsisting between us and Portugal. Sir, I feel the considerations to which I have more particularly adverted present too narrow and limited a view of the case. It is not only among ages long gone by, and in treaties now superseded by time and the course of events, that traces are discoverable of the relation in which Portugal has been considered to stand in regard to Great Britain; for in the latest compact entered into between the nations of modern Europe, that which now forms the patent law of the civilized world, I allude, sir, to the convention of Vienna, a similar course was taken in the treaty then entered into between this country and Portugal. (Hear.) At that period, sir, Great Britain was well aware of the inconveniences which many individuals were fond of representing as arising out of our connexion with Portugal; but we were also aware of the credit, and, I will add, advantage, derivable from that connexion; and we renewed our obligations to uphold and support Portugal, on future occasions,

in terms so strong and imperative, as to lay a foundation perfectly adequate to support the present proceeding. The terms of that treaty I will take leave to read to the house previous to calling on it to concur in the vote, with the proposal of which it is my intention to conclude. The third article of the treaty between Great Britain and Portugal, concluded at Vienna on the 22d of February, 1815, stated, that 'the treaty of alliance entered into between his Britannic majesty and the king of Portugal at Rio de Janeiro, was founded on circumstances of a temporary nature, which had now happily ceased to exist; and, on that ground, the provisions of the treaty should be considered null and void as relating to all the parties interested: however, without prejudice to the ancient and established treaties of alliance, friendship, and guarantee, which had so long and happily subsisted between the two countries: these treaties being now renewed by the high contracting parties, and acknowledged to remain in full force and effect.' In order that the house may fully understand, and accurately appreciate, the effect of the observations which the perusal of this treaty is calculated to excite, I may be permitted to explain the previous circumstances of Portugal, and the condition of the reigning family in that country. In the year 1807, when, by the declaration of Buonaparte, the house of Braganza ceased to reign, the king of Portugal, under the advice of his Britannic majesty's government, set sail for the Brazils, and established in that country the seat of his monarchy. This step was taken by virtue of a secret convention concluded between this country and Portugal, to the effect, that so long as the house of Braganza remained in that part of their dominions, or in the event of their return, his Britannic majesty would never acknowledge any other dynasty on the throne of Portugal than the family of Braganza. I may be allowed to remark, that this convention greatly contributed to the furtherance of a proceeding which placed that family beyond the power of Buonaparte, and consequently promoted the ascendancy of British interests in the Peninsula. It was this secret convention that brought about the emigration, and greatly contributed to decide that step by which the royal family of Portugal was removed from the power of France. The king of Portugal having become established

upon his throne, the article ceased to be a secret, and was made a part of the law of nations by the treaty of 1810, and from that time up to the treaty of Vienna. It was clearly understood throughout Europe, that we had determined not to acknowledge any sovereign in Portugal, except a member of the house of Braganza. But that determination arose solely from the supposition that that sovereign would be compelled to a forced residence in Brazil. Beyond this it was not binding upon us, as it was felt that the moment the ground of the obligation ceased, there was an end to the treaty. It happened, in consequence of the happy conclusion of the war, that the option of returning was offered to his majesty, and as it was felt that the force of such a previous obligation no longer existed, the forcible separation from Portugal not continuing, it was deemed reasonable that we should perform such other obligation as the force of existing treaties rendered imperative upon us. The king of Portugal came into possession of his European dominions, the ground of our former obligation ceased, and the treaty was so far ended. But, when that treaty was so far ended, there came another obligation, which I have just now read to the house. That treaty, I may be allowed to say, was repealed without prejudice to other ancient treaties of friendship and alliance; treaties so long and so happily subsisting, between the two crowns of Portugal and Great Britain, which were, to a certain extent, renewed by the two high contracting parties, and which were, to this day, of full force and effect. I should also state, that, if all the treaties to which this paragraph referred, were, by some convulsion of nature, or some other accident, consigned to total oblivion, I consider Great Britain to be morally bound to fulfil her obligations—(Hear, hear, hear)—and that, in case of necessity, she would be bound, and is bound, to act in the defence of Portugal—(continued cries of Hear, hear). But, happily, that is not the case; all the preceding treaties are in existence—they are in the full knowledge of all the civilized nations of the world—they are of easy reference to all mankind —they are known to Spain—to all the continental states of Europe—they are so numerous, and the result of the whole is so clear, that I shall merely select one or two of them, with a view to show the nature of our obligations to our ancient friend

and ally—Portugal. The first to which I shall advert is that concluded in 1666, at the time of the marriage of Charles the Second with the infanta of Portugal. The obligations of that treaty, after reciting the delivering of Bombay, Tangier, and other places, some of which still remained, and some not, to the government to which they were delivered, it was stated, that, in consideration of those grants, which were of so much benefit to the king of Great Britain, he professed, and declared himself, by and with the consent and advice of his privy council, that he would take upon him the defence of Portugal, that he would aid and defend her by sea and by land, with all his power, and in all other manner and respect, even as he would defend England itself. By that treaty it was further conditioned, that, in case of necessity, or any foreign attack, he should send and transport, at his own proper cost and expense, two regiments of horse, of 500 men, and two regiments of foot, of 1000 men each. There were other various stipulations, amounting to the same effect, which render it unnecessary for me to go farther into it at present. The next treaty, to which I beg the attention of the house, is that of 1703; it was a tripartite treaty, made between the states-general of Holland, Great Britain, and Portugal: it was also a treaty contemporaneous with the famous commercial treaty of Methuen, whose provisions still continue to be in full force and effect. By the second article of the treaty of 1703, it was conditioned, that if at any time, and whenever it happened, the kings of Spain or France, or both, or either of them, should make war on Portugal, or give reason to suspect they had jointly or separately any intention to make war on her or her colonial possessions beyond the seas: then it goes on to state, that her majesty shall use her good offices to persuade those powers not to make war; but, in case those offices should not succeed, the third article states, that provided such interference should not be successful, and that war should actually have been made on Portugal, then the above-named contracting powers declare, that they shall make war on the kings of Spain or France, or both or either of them; and that, while hostile arms shall be borne against Portugal, they shall provide twelve thousand men, armed and equipped, and leave them there while their presence may be deemed necessary. From these articles, the

house will perceive the nature, if not the extent, of our ancient obligations to our ally. I am ready to admit, sir, that either of these treaties might be, by time and circumstances, supposed to have relaxed in their force; or it might be asked, why one party having withdrawn itself from the responsibility, say Holland for instance, the other should be still considered as bound to adhere to it? It might be said, the language of these treaties was so loose and prodigal, that they could only have originated in good feeling, and that it was out of nature to suppose any one nation would engage to defend another as she would herself. It might be said, there was something so exaggerated in these treaties, as that they were never intended to be carried into effect. But with regard to this very treaty of 1703, even if I stood upon it alone; even though the circumstances of Holland had changed; even if her sentiments had changed; if her obligations were either altered or become obsolete; I need not raise the question whether, the government and sentiments of England not changing, she is now liable or not to perform her obligation? This is not the time to do so, even if I admitted that such a question could have been raised. The objections, if any, should have been taken at the congress of Vienna, when the eyes of the whole world were open to our relative situation with Portugal; when we had proclaimed the existence of our ancient treaties of friendship and alliance, so long subsisting with her; and when they were acknowledged to be of full force and effect. That was the time to object, if objection was thought necessary; and it is not so much on the specific articles of the treaties of 1661 and 1703 that we have acted and continue to act, as on the general spirit of all the treaties, admitted and recognised at the congress of Vienna. I say Portugal has a right to claim the assistance of Great Britain, as an ally, and call upon her to defend the integrity of her territory. This is the state of the case as to our moral and political obligations towards Portugal; and I am not ashamed to say—I have a right to say—that when Portugal, in the apprehension of a coming storm, applied for our assistance; while we had no hesitation in acknowledging our obligation to afford it, if the *casus fœderis* had once arisen; yet I say that we were bound to wait till we ascertained the fact upon sufficient authority. Whether delay

or difficulty interposed, it was not as to the existence of an admitted obligation, but as to the knowledge of the fact having actually taken place, which justified the call for our assistance. In this stage of our proceedings, I beg to answer incidentally to some charge of delay which has been made against his majesty's government on this very important subject. But, in few words, I can state to the house, there is not the shadow of foundation for any such charge. It was only on Sunday, the 3d of December, that I received from the Portuguese ambassador the direct and formal demand of assistance from this country. True, long before that time rumours were afloat of an unauthorized description—rumours, finding their way from Madrid, where every thing was distorted, through the channels of the French press, where every thing was again disfigured and perverted, to serve party purposes: but, until the 8th of December, we had not received that accurate information on which alone we could found a communication to parliament. That precise information, on which we could act, only arrived on Friday last. On Saturday, the decision of the government was taken—on Sunday we obtained the sanction of his majesty—on Monday we came down to parliament—and at this very hour, while I have now the honour of addressing the house, British troops are on their march for Portugal. (Cheers.) I trust, therefore, that we are not in justice to be charged with any unseemly delay; but, on the other hand, while we felt the claim of Portugal to be so clear, our obligation to assist her so binding, and the possible consequences of interference so spreading, it was our duty not to give any credit to hearsay or to rumour; but, while admitting the full force of our obligation, we were bound to have the full knowledge of the facts of the case, before we took a step whose consequences no man could precisely calculate. Rumours and reports, as I have just said, were long afloat, of incursions made by Spain upon our ally; but, then, they reached us through channels upon which no man in his senses would found any grave proceeding. In one case, at Madrid, they were put forth to deceive; in others, to conceal; and, coming through the French newspaper press—these rumours, I say, coming through such sources, were not to be relied on by his majesty's government, and we therefore waited for authenticated facts, in order to

come before parliament with what we might call the truth. In former instances when parliament was called upon to assist Portugal, the regular and constitutional power of the monarchy was lodged in the breast of the king: the signification of his wish, the expression of his desire, the putting forward his individual claim for assistance, would have been enough; but when it was stated to me that matters had changed, that the constitution was modified and altered, it became my duty to inquire, first, whether the constitution of Portugal authorized the claim; next, if it were competent to the authorities making it to do so, and whether the chambers had given their sanction to the reception of our troops, such as we were to expect for the troops of an old and faithful ally. We were bound to take care, before a single soldier left England, or set his foot upon the shore of Portugal, that the sanction of the executive—of all the proper authorities—should be obtained; and I beg leave again to state, with reference to the charge of delay, which has somewhere or other been brought against his majesty's ministers, that it was only this morning I received the sanction of the chambers assembled at Lisbon. So far, then, from any charge of delay being justifiably brought against the government, I can boldly say, had we proceeded faster, we would have acted precipitately, and every caution was necessary to be used, before we involved this country in proceedings, which might be proved to be unnecessary by the result, or might expose us to the unpleasant reception of our troops in Portugal. The account which I received to-day of the proceedings of the chambers at Lisbon, is contained in a despatch from Sir W. A'Court, dated the 29th of November. It states, that the day after the arrival of the news of the entry of the rebels, ministers demanded the extension of their executive powers, an augmentation of the troops, and permission to apply for foreign assistance. The deputies assembled, agreed to the demand with acclamation, and a similar spirit operating in the other chamber, the members rose in a body from their seats, expressed their readiness to acquiesce in the call, and many of them offered their personal assistance in the cause of their country. The Duke Cadoval, the president, was the first who so declared himself, and the minister, who described the proceeding to our ambassador, declared it was a moment worthy of the good days of Portugal.

(Hear, hear.) So far the house will see we have a reasonable guarantee for the good reception of our troops; and then, the next question remaining for our consideration is, has the *casus fœderis* arrived? Bands of Portuguese, armed and equipped by Spain, made hostile incursions into Portugal at several points; and what was remarkable in this case is, that the attack on Portugal is not the ground on which the application for British assistance has been complied with. The attack in the south of Portugal was stated in the French papers; but that on Tras os Montes was only received, authentically, this morning, and those on Villa Viçosa no longer ago than Friday. The intelligence of this new fact is the more satisfactory, as it confirmed the facts which were already known. The irruption upon one point of Portugal might be stated to be made by some corps who had escaped the inspection of the vigilance of the Spanish government; it might be represented as the effort of some stragglers, acting in defiance of Spain: but an attack on the whole line gives that decided and certain character to the aggression which cannot be mistaken. Even if a single Spaniard, in arms, had crossed the frontier, the hostile aggression would be undoubted; and here the question is, to consider whether persons, clothed and equipped by Spain, and crossing the frontiers, are, or are not, guilty of an attack or invasion of Portugal—forsooth, because they were not Spanish soldiers, or Spanish mercenaries in the employ of Spain; but Portuguese troops, whom Portugal had nurtured, and who, in return, had brought with them devastation into their native land, and that by means furnished by a foreign enemy? (Hear, hear.) Why, it could be but petty and puerile quibbling to say, that this was not an invasion, because the agents were originally from Portugal: and that, therefore, their attack was not to be repelled. I said, formerly, in this house, and I repeat it now, that there is no intention, on our part, to interfere with the internal affairs of Portugal, or any other state; and my distinction, I beg to be understood, is between her external and internal affairs. As to discussions on the form of her government, on the nature of her institutions, or with respect to their adaptation to the happiness of the people, God forbid it ever should be our policy, or our duty, to interfere; but if bands of refugees, armed against the mother

country, were to be allowed to put off their country for one purpose, and then put it on to answer another, I say, it would be permitting such a laxity in politics, and such a solecism in morality, that we should be indeed held worthy of that reprobation to which we have been subjected; but for the non-permission of which, I think, we are entitled to that commendation, which, I have no doubt, we shall receive from this house, and all good and honourable men out of it. (Hear, hear.) Here, then, is the whole of my case to lay before parliament—here is a case of undoubted obligation on our parts, not framed in a corner, nor kept secret, but recorded amongst all the recollections of history, and all the well-known occurrences of our own time. On the other hand, here is a case of foreign aggression, carried on by foreign means, directed to foreign objects; and, putting the fact and obligation together, I say, neither could the king of Great Britain refuse assistance to his ally, nor the parliament dissent from his majesty, in giving effect to, and adequately fulfilling, undoubted obligations. On this case, I can safely rest the whole of the question; and I have so put it together, without any reference to collateral circumstances, because my wish is, that the precise ground of our interference should, in the minds of those who now hear me, and of those who are likely to hear of our proceedings, be kept separate and distinct, from collateral grounds, on what I need not now say, whether we would have been bound to interfere or not. I wish to separate the legal gist of the question from all collateral circumstances which might, or might not, constitute a ground of claim for our calling on parliament, but which might, nevertheless, be found deserving of parliamentary consideration. I feel, in what I have henceforward to state, that I would not be dealing fairly to parliament, if I kept back any thing which might throw the greatest possible light upon the real state of the affairs with which we have to grapple. If, however, I had now sat down—if I said no more—I think I have already said enough; but, sir, when I state to the house that I am willing to rest my case even here, I am sure they will see, that the vote for which I call is a vote of defence for Portugal, and not of war against Spain. As I said before, I beg of honourable gentlemen to keep these matters separate and distinct: and though, in what I am

now going to say, I must bear rather hard on Spain, yet I must say it is most unjustifiable—it is contrary to all notions of good neighbourhood with the Portuguese—it is contrary to all rules of God and man, that Spain should have committed such an aggression upon Portugal. (Hear, hear, hear.) I do not, however, mean to say there is no *locus penitentiæ* for Spain—no possibility of her making redress—no opportunity of retracing the steps she has taken; all I do say is, it is our duty to fly to the defence of Portugal, be the result what it may (cries of hear, hear); but that declaration I consider by no means a necessary ground on which to call for the unanimous address of this house, in answer to his majesty's most gracious message. The present situation of Portugal is so unusual, and the recent years of her history are so crowded with extraordinary events, that perhaps the house will not consider I am unprofitably wasting their time, if I state a few particulars on the subject, and its effects upon a portion of Europe. It is known, that in consequence of the King of Portugal residing in the Brazils, with a view to raise it from a colonial to a metropolitan condition, the king resolved upon his departure to his European states, where there grew up a degree of independence, which threatened the peace of both countries. It is also known, that Great Britain undertook the mediation between Brazil and Portugal; that we persuaded the king to acknowledge the separate jurisdiction of the two countries, and to place the crown of Brazil on the head of his eldest son. The ink upon that agreement was scarcely dry when the premature and unexpected death of the King of Portugal induced a new state of things, and the crown of the two countries was finally re-united on one head, which it was our policy, as well as that of Brazil and Portugal, should not have been the case. The advice of this country, and another nation connected with Brazil, was tendered upon the occasion, but not before the King of Portugal had determined to abdicate the crown of Portugal in favour of his eldest daughter. This abdication was accompanied with the offer of a free constitutional charter. It was stated that this had been done by the advice of Great Britain. It was no such thing. England gave no such advice; not because ministers approved or disapproved of such a measure, but because they felt that it formed no part of the duty of

an English ministry to interfere with the internal regulations of that or any other country. (Hear, hear, hear.) It is certainly true, that that charter was brought from Brazil by a gentleman who has filled, and continues to fill, an office of high trust from this country. Sir Charles Stuart happened to be at Brazil at that time, and he was requested by the King of Portugal to take that charter to Lisbon as he was returning home. Sir Charles Stuart did bring it to Portugal, but no blame whatever attached to that gentleman, in consequence of having done so. But he was ordered to return to England, in order to prevent the suspicion that that charter was advised by British conusels, or supported by British agency. With respect to the character of that constitution, I do not think it right, at the present, to offer any opinion; privately, I have my own opinion. But, as an English minister, all I have to say is, may God prosper the attempt made by Portugal to obtain constitutional liberty, and may that nation be as fit to receive and cherish it, as, on other occasions, she is capable of discharging her duties amongst the nations of Europe. (Loud and continued cheers.) I am not the champion or the critic of that constitution. It has proceeded from the legitimate authority. This, in a great measure, has reconciled it to continental Europe; and to us, as Englishmen, it must be much more endeared, by the ready accordance to it of all classes of the Portuguese people. Their constitution, as to its origin, has not been questioned by those powers most jealous of liberal institutions; it has been accepted almost unanimously by those persons who have to live under it; it is founded on principles similar to our own, though modified: Englishmen must therefore wish it well. But it is not for us to impose it on the people of Portugal, if they are either unwilling to receive it, or if any great schism exist about its fitness and propriety to the wants and wishes of the nation; and, finally, we are not to fight its battles, if it be not fairly and honourably made appear to us, that the great body of the Portuguese are ready to maintain it at the expense of their lives and properties. (Cries of hear.) We must go to Portugal; we are bound by treaty to do so, and when there, though nothing shall be done forcibly to maintain the constitution, so nothing shall be done by others to prevent its being carried into full effect. (Cheers.)

This is as much as it is now necessary to say on this point; but it is no more than is fit and prudent to say, that we shall not meddle with her internal affairs, which we shall leave her to adjust and settle as she may find prudent and convenient. We shall leave her to settle her own dissensions; but while Great Britain has an arm to wield, external force shall not be used to control the opinions of the people of Portugal. (Cheers.) Force has not been yet directly used for that iniquitous purpose; but what are we to say, if force, seeking other channels, and finding its way into Portugal, should vainly flatter itself, that, by changing its character, by assuming different shapes, and by the employment of renegadoes, it is not to be repelled; and the more so, when such force is employed against a country, having the honour of being the old and faithful ally of Great Britain? Has such, I ask, been the conduct of Spain? Let the house and the country decide. However, without now entering into the question, whether this be the conduct of Spain, or the government of Spain; whether it be the work of a government acting with the usual power, prudence, and foresight of a government acting for the good of the people, without which it is not fit to be a government; or whether it be the result of secret powers, operated upon by factious people, defying the government in the capital, and disobeying them on the frontiers; this, I say, can make no difference to Portugal while suffering from such conduct, or to England, who has to avenge the wrongs committed upon her ancient ally. If the attack come from the government of Spain, having a power to control it, they must be responsible for its results; and if they have not the power, they should be called upon immediately to assume it. It would be unjust to the government of Spain, to say there is a disposition in its members to entertain an unconquerable hatred to free institutions; but it would be equally unjust not to state the facts fully and fairly as they exist. I am persuaded that there is, in the vast majority of the Spanish people, a decided love of arbitrary power, and that they do feel annoyed at, and exasperated against, the more liberal institutions of their neighbours, so that, whether the government do, or do not, partake in their sentiments—do, or do not, stimulate their passions; it is certain that this vast majority do not require its orders to excite them to

action. It may be fairly and naturally supposed, that a sort of national antipathy has existed, and does exist, between those two nations; that from this antipathy has arisen mutual injuries, mutual oppressions, and mutual complaints, such as no government could altogether explain or redress; and that in those antipathies have originated the differences, which, in their progress, have been matured. That some power has been actively employed in moving and increasing those differences, is also most certain; but I believe that their real origin is to be found in the nature of the Spanish people, rather than in the nature, or in any acts, of the government itself. But this is the question that is to be developed between Spain and us, and with respect to which his majesty's most gracious message has been sent to the house of commons. If the Spanish government, though participating in the blame, never meant to commit the acts of which Portugal complains in the language of accusation—if it never did embody the deserters from the army of that kingdom—if it never did put arms into the hands of the discontented of her people—if it never did stimulate their discontent until it became rebellion: if, on the contrary, the direct orders of the government were directly disobeyed—if the treaties were broken, despite of its intentions and commands—then, I say, let us see its repentance for what has been done, and let us measure that repentance by the care it will take to prevent the recurrence of those evils, and of those aggressions—and, then, to this address I might propose a different reply. But let us remember, that a measure for the defence of Portugal is not necessarily a measure for carrying on war against Spain. I am about to state some facts which it is material I should state, before I call upon you to decide as to what course you intend to pursue. When, within a comparatively recent period, a great desertion had taken place of the Portuguese army into Spain, and also a desertion of the Spanish army into Portugal, at our advice, the Portuguese government, refusing to give them shelter, did unquestionably discountenance the desertion of those Spanish soldiers. There existed a treaty between Spain and Portugal, respecting the giving up of deserters, by which Portugal had a right to claim from Spain, that all deserters from her should be forthwith restored to Portugal. I cannot say, if it

were in consequence of a resolution of the Portuguese government, or in consequence of the advice which we conveyed to them —for I believe that both occurrences took place nearly at the same time—that Portugal was content to waive this right, because it saw the difficulties with which it would have to contend, if those deserters were restored, in either placing them on the ground of a dangerous amnesty, or of ordering executions as numerous as they would be deplorable. From the choice of those evils Portugal desired to be spared; and, therefore, Portugal told Spain, that if, instead of delivering up those deserters themselves, their arms and their equipments were returned, the officers and the men separated, and both removed from the frontiers into the interior of the kingdom, Portugal would, on her part, be satisfied. A treaty to this effect was then solemnly entered into by Spain, and a promise that it should be fulfilled, in every sense, was as solemnly given to Portugal on the one hand, and to England and to France on the other; a treaty which was entered into on one day and violated the next; and not violated in one instance only, but in many; for the deserters from Portugal, who were to be so dispersed, and so rendered innoxious, were suffered to remain quietly in their depots, in which they were trained for action, and, in fact, fitted for that expedition which they have since undertaken. I say, after such perfidy, the blame of which must rest somewhere, it becomes a necessary act on the part of the Spanish government to show that it rests not there; to show that the fault was not only not theirs, that it in no way originated with them; to show that they were ready at all times, and under all circumstances, to fulfil the engagement, and to perform the promise they had made, not only to Portugal, but to England and to France. I have said that this promise was made to France as well as to England, and I should do an act of injustice towards that country, if I did not add, that the exertions of France to induce its performance, have been as unceasing, though as fruitless, as those of Great Britain. At length, when information of the irruption into Portugal was received in France, the French ministry recalled their ambassador from the court of Spain, and directed the chargé d'affaires, who remained in his room, to inform the court of Spain, that it was to look

for no encouragement or support from France, and recommending to Spain to recant the sentiments to which she had given utterance, and to pursue a line of conduct of a very different character. I am therefore bound to say, that this nation has exerted herself in a way that may be deemed most satisfactory. Sir, it will be well for Spain, on hearing of the step that we, in consequence of the message from his majesty, are now taking, to consider, as I have said, how she will meet the call we are about to make. My earnest hope is, that she will meet it in such a manner as will put a stop to consequences where I devoutly wish they should stop; and I will not therefore pursue this portion of the subject, by arguing upon those consequences which, my hope is, may be averted. I set out by saying, that there were many reasons which induced me to think, that nothing short of a point of national honour could make desirable any approximation to the danger of war; but let me be distinctly understood as not meaning that I dread war in a good cause, and I trust that in no other will it ever be the lot of this country to engage; that I dread war from a distrust of our powers and of our resources to meet it. No. I dread it upon far other grounds. I dread it, because I am conscious of the tremendous power which this country possesses, of pushing any war in which she may now be engaged to consequences at the bare contemplation of which I shudder. It will be recollected, that when, some years ago, I took the liberty of adverting to a topic of this nature, when it was referred to in this house, with respect to the position of this country at the present time, I then stated, that our position was not merely one of neutrality between contending nations, but between contending principles and opinions; that it was a position of neutrality, which alone preserved the balance of power, the maintenance of which I believed necessary to the safety and welfare of Europe. Nearly four years, or rather three years and a half, of experience, have confirmed, and not altered, the opinion I then declared; and I still fear, that the next war in Europe, if it should spread beyond the narrow compass of Portugal and Spain, will be a war of the most tremendous nature—(hear, hear)—because it will be a war of conflicting opinions; and I know that, if the interests and the honour of this country should oblige us to enter into it, although we might

enter it, as I trust we shall always do, with a firm desire to mitigate rather than to exasperate—to contend with arms, and not with opinions; yet I know that this country could not avoid seeing ranked under her banners all the restless, and all the dissatisfied, whether with cause, or without cause, of every nation with which she might be placed at variance. I say, sir, the consciousness of this fact—the knowledge that there is in the hands of this country such a tremendous power—(hear, hear, hear!)—induces me to feel as I do feel. But it is one thing 'to have a giant's strength,' and another thing to 'use it like a giant.' The consciousness that we have this power keeps us safe. Our business is not to seek out opportunities for displaying it, but to keep it, so that it may be hereafter shown that we knew its proper use, and to shrink from converting the umpire into the oppressor:—

> ——— Celsa sedet Æolus arce,
> Sceptra tenens: mollitque animos et temperat iras.
> Ni faciat, maria ac terras cœlumque profundum
> Quippe ferant rapidi secum, verrantque per auras.

Sir, the consequences of the letting loose of those passions which are all chained up, may be such as would lead to a scene of desolation, such as no one can, for a moment, contemplate without horror, and such as I could never lie easy upon my couch, if I had the consciousness of having, by one hour, precipitated. This, then, is the reason—a reason the reverse of fear—a reason the contrary of disability—why I dread the recurrence of a war. That this reason may be felt by those who are acting on opposite principles, before the time for using our power shall arrive, I would bear much, and I would forbear long; I would almost put up with any thing that did not touch our national faith and national honour, rather than let slip the furies of war, the leash of which is in our hands, while we know not whom they may reach, and doubt where the devastation may end. (Continued cheering.) Such is the love of peace which the British government acknowledges, and such the duty of peace which the circumstances of the world inculcate. (Cheers from all sides.) In obedience to this conviction, and with the hope of avoiding extremities, I will push no further the topics of this

part of the address. Let us defend Portugal, whoever may be the assailants, because it is a work of duty; and let us end where that duty ends. We go to Portugal, not to rule, not to dictate, not to prescribe laws; we go but to plant there the standard of England, that there foreign dominion shall not come."

The effect of this speech upon the house of commons cannot be described; even Mr. Brougham was charmed into unqualified admiration, and, in supporting the motion of the right honourable secretary, he said, that the burdens of the country, however oppressive, would be borne cheerfully through the impending struggle, should war be the result.

"Five or six years ago, he thought the burden was as much as they could bear, as he knew it could not be increased by proper means. But now they were governed by an intelligent, liberal, and truly English principle. (Cheers.) The Portuguese constitution was worthy of the most distinguished statesman who now had the management of our foreign affairs. The subject had inspired the eloquence of the right honourable gentleman with a degree of fervour unprecedented in effect, even (and he could not rank it higher) beyond that right honourable gentleman's former most eloquent orations. (Cheers.) He (Mr. Brougham) felt that, in the principles now acted upon by our government (and he rejoiced that it was seen that in those principles they were strong and impregnable), the burdens which they had felt so heavily would not hinder them, when the day of trial came, from coping with a world combined in arms against us. But the day of trial would not come; the knowledge that these principles were acted on would be a security against it."

It was fortunate for Mr. Canning that his motion was opposed, and an amendment attempted to be substituted in its place, as it brought him up to reply,

which he did in the following strains of powerful eloquence:

"I do not intend to occupy the house with a reply; but there have been two or three objections taken by honourable gentlemen which I should be sorry to leave unanswered. I admit I understated the case against Spain—I did so purposely—I did so designedly. I wished to show no more of her conduct than was sufficient to establish the *casus fœderis*, but not to state so much as would make it impossible for Spain to avoid war. The honourable gentleman who spoke last wishes, in his great love for peace, to do that which would make war inevitable. He would not interfere now—he would wish to tell Spain, 'You have not done enough to rouse us—you have given no cause of offence—I think nothing of your hovering over my frontiers—I think nothing of your coming in arms, of your ravaging my plains, and carrying destruction into my cities—I think nothing of your collecting knots of conspirators, and of your supplying them with food, clothing, and arms—nothing of your training them, supplying them with Spanish stores, and of your sending them into Portugal. I will not stir for all these things; but, in order to keep the peace of Europe, which I so dearly love, I call on you to make a declaration of war, and then I 'll come and fight you.' (Laughter.) That is the effect of the hon. member's speech—that his contrivance to keep the peace. The more clumsy contrivance of government has been, to warn the Spanish authorities that they were known to meditate disturbances in Portugal. His majesty's ministers said to them—'Beware of your proceedings, for we are sure to avenge your deeds: it is with you to determine if the present misunderstanding shall end in open hostilities.' In the meantime the question is open to any measures of reconcilement; and whether ministers or the hon. gentleman are right—whether we ought to have endeavoured to obtain the grand object of his chivalrous imagination, a trial of that question upon a tented field, and in a listed battle—if it was really our duty, as we ourselves apprehend, to nip the disorder in the bud; or if, according to the hon. gentleman, we ought to let it grow up to maturity, in order to mow it down with the more magnificent scythe of war,—I leave the house to

determine. (Laughter and cheers.) It has been complained that no papers have been laid before the house. The facts which call for our interference might be made as notorious as the noon-day sun. It should be remembered, that if this course had been taken—if an act of unmistakeable hostility on the part of Spain had been demonstrated by papers laid on the table of the house, Spain would have been precluded from that *locus penitentiæ* which I was desirous to leave to her. I did not wish to cut off all means of retreat—to drive Spain into a corner from which she could have no escape. I hope I have sufficiently explained the reasons why I understate the case against Spain. With the knowledge which my official situation necessarily gives me, I make a statement to the house such as I judge will be sufficient to answer my purpose. It is for the house in general to judge whether I have succeeded. My hon. friend, if he ask at the proper time, should that time arrive, will be convinced that it is not from want of evidence that my statement is not so full as he wished it to be. An amendment has been made upon the original proposition, and it has been justified by a reference to a declaration which I made some years ago, when I stated that it would be exceedingly onerous for this country to engage in war—which declaration has been supposed to be inconsistent with the measure which I now propose. The variation between the two cases upon which I ground the difference of conduct is, that, in the one instance, I maintained that war was to be avoided when we were not obliged to engage in it; whereas, in the present case, I say, that unless it can be averted by seasonable demonstrations on the part of this country, war cannot be avoided. I do not, therefore, change my opinions as to the desirableness of peace, nor do I the less deprecate the necessity of war; but I say that, in the former instance, though, in the opinion of some respectable persons in and out of parliament, it might have been politic to embark in war, my argument was, that we were not bound by any engagement of good faith or honour to engage in war—that our choice, in short, was free, and, being free, my choice was for peace. My argument, at the present day, is, that we have no choice—our faith is engaged; our honour is pledged; and, with all the same predilections for peace which I then professed, I maintain that no course is left to

us on the present occasion, but that which is dictated both by honour and policy, to maintain the faith of the country, and to fulfil the national engagements. It has been suggested, that the foreign enlistment act might be repealed on the present occasion, and Mina and his associates be enabled to rush to the contest, and by that means obviate the effect of the aggression upon Portugal. Believing, sir, as I do, that such a measure would entail the heaviest calamities upon that country, I cannot consent to give it my countenance. I am ready to admit, sir, in the first place, that the foreign enlistment bill was passed principally at the instigation of Spain, and that that bill operated more in her favour than in that of any other European power. In the next place, I am ready to admit, that the whole conduct of Spain has been to do directly towards Portugal those acts which Spain earnestly implored Great Britain to take away from British subjects the power of doing towards her. If we do what is suggested, there would be some ground for saying to this country, 'you recognised and acted upon a principle in 1819, when you had no private interests to promote—you last year, acting upon that principle, refused to withdraw the protection afforded to foreign powers by that bill; but you now withdraw it, and violate that principle where you have a private interest to promote.' I admit, there would be strong ground for saying to Spain:—'Since the year 1819, we have given you the benefit of a particularly efficient measure, and you have thought proper, since last year, to turn that very measure, conferred solely for your own protection, against the pacific interests of our ally. Are we not fairly entitled, then, to place you where you would have been, had that act never passed?' This would, undoubtedly, have justified the revocation of the bill from Spain: that I most clearly admit; but I do not equally well see how it would apply to the other great objects involved in such a question as this, and which I have rather adumbrated than overstated in my opening speech. The great desire of this country ought undoubtedly to be to effect her purpose by the most lenient means. If circumstances should lead to hostilities, and that war must rage in Spain, the course now taken by Great Britain would rather take from war that most tremendous of all characters which could attach to such

an event, were it once driven to assume the name of a war of opinion. (Hear, hear!) If we are to have war, let us—if we can take from it that character which has been so ably and so eloquently described by an honourable and learned gentleman (Mr. Brougham)—that tremendous character which must attach to war, when war is let loose in the shape of a war of opinion—(Cheers.)—I, sir, for one, should be extremely sorry to be driven, whatever acts Spain might be guilty of, to have recourse to that most lamentable and disastrous mode of warfare.—Another point has been touched upon by an honourable member, who, in a speech with which, in no other respect, I find fault, has, in the most handsome and able manner, stated his reasons for approving of the line of conduct adopted, in this instance, by his majesty's government. That honourable member has said, 'Instead of repealing the foreign enlistment bill, call upon France to withdraw her armies from Spain.' There are, sir, so many considerations connected with that subject, that they would carry me beyond what it is necessary to state upon the present occasion. It is enough now to state, that I do not know how the French army can be employed to promote the views of Spain. I believe the effect of the presence of the French army in Spain, is the protection rather than otherwise of that very party, to put down which, the aid of that army was called in; and my firm belief is, that the first and immediate consequence of the withdrawal of that army, at a moment of excitement, would be the letting loose of that party rage, of which the party least in numbers would be the victims. But when it is stated, that the presence of the French army in Spain has entirely altered the relative situations of France and Great Britain, and that France is thereby raised, and Great Britain lowered, in the eyes of Europe, I must beg leave, most humbly, to give my dissent to that proposition. The house knows—the country knows—that when the French army was on the point of entering Spain, that I, in common with the other members of his majesty's government, did all in my power to prevent it; that we did resist, and that we were most anxious to resist it, by every means short of war. We did not think the entry of that army into Spain a sufficient ground for war on the part of this country; and that, sir, for various reasons, and,

among others, for this, that whatever effect a war, commenced upon the mere ground of the entry of a French army into Spain, may have, the effect it would not have would be this, to get that army out of Spain. I again repeat, that a war, entered into for the express purpose of getting the French army out of Spain, would defeat the object wished to be obtained. Whoever heard, in the whole history of wars between the European powers, of a war between two great nations having been ended by the obtaining of the exact, the identical, object for which the war was begun? I believe that, in the whole history of Europe, such an instance cannot be found. I also think, sir, that the effects of the entry of the French army into Spain have been exaggerated, and think that those exaggerations are to be attributed to these circumstances—that the connexion between France and Spain is mixed up with recollections of the most brilliant, the most glorious, periods of English history. Now, however the withdrawal of that army might be in other respects and at other times desirable, I cannot allow that it at all affects the present question. On the contrary, I most sincerely believe that the exertions of France are directed to the preservation of existing treaties; and it is my conviction, that if the army was withdrawn, the situation of affairs would not be remedied; while, in a moment of such excitement, party rage would re-assume its desperate violence, and that class, avowedly the least in numbers, would, beyond question, become its victims. (Hear, hear, hear!) The most exaggerated importance has always, in my opinion, been attached in this country to the connexion between France and Spain. I ask the house to look back to the time of Anne, when the question of the association of France and Spain was agitated. I ask the house to look back to the votes of parliament at that period, where they will find, that the parliament had voted that no peace could be made between the two countries, whilst Spain remained in the power of France; or, rather, whilst a Bourbon sat upon the throne of Spain. Look to the exaggerated apprehensions of those days, and see how they have been realized; look back to the state of Spain in those days—look at her when she was a most formidable power—when she was a power of such strength as to threaten to blow up the whole world. Look at her in those days, and you will see that England was then

fixed in a nook of that Spain—that our possession of the Rock of Gibraltar was contemporary with those exaggerated apprehensions. I do not believe, sir, the danger which could accrue from the possession of Spain by France to be so great as it is represented. Spain *now* is not what Spain was *then*. Where can we now find that Spain, in the map of the world, which was to have swallowed up the power of maritime England? Do we still remain in a nook of that same Spain—Gibraltar; where we have settled at a period contemporaneous with those fears, holding a firm and unshaken occupation up to this hour? And where, now, is that nation which 'was to have shaken us from our sphere?' That Spain of old maps was, be it remembered, the Spain within the limits of whose empire the sun never set—it was Spain with the Indies;—where will you find her now? (Cheers.) When the French army entered Spain, we might, if we chose, have resisted that measure by a war; but, sir, if we had resisted it by a war, that war would not be a war entered into for the same object for which the wars of other days were undertaken; that war would not have been a war for the restoration of the balance of power. Other means should be resorted to for that purpose, if necessary. The balance of power in Europe varied as civilization advanced, and new nations sprung up in Europe. One hundred years ago, France, Spain, the Netherlands, and perhaps Austria, constituted the balance of power. Within the next thirty years, Russia started up. Within the following thirty years, Prussia became a power of importance; and thus the balance of power, and the means of preserving it, were enlarged. The means of preserving the balance were enlarged, I may say, in proportion to the number of states—in proportion to the number of weights which could be put into the one scale or the other. To take a leaf, sir, from the book of the policy of Europe in the times of William and of Anne, for the purpose of regulating the balance of power in Europe at the present day, is to be utterly regardless of the march of events, and to regulate our policy by a confusion of facts. I admit, sir, that the entry of a French army into Spain was a disparagement to Great Britain—was a blow to the feelings of this country. I do not stand up here to deny that fact. One of the modes of redress was, by a direct attack

upon France—by a war upon the soil of Spain. The other was to make the possession of that country harmless in rival hands—to make it worse than harmless, to make it injurious to the possessor. The latter mode I have adopted. Do you think, that, for the disparagement to England, we have not been compensated? Do you think, that, for the blockade of Cadiz, England has not been fully compensated? I looked, sir, at Spain by another name than Spain. I looked upon that power as Spain and the Indies. I looked at the Indies, and there I have called a new world into existence, and thus redressed the balance of power. (Loud and continued cheering.) I redeemed the movement of France, while I left her own act upon her, unmitigated and unredressed, so that I believe she would be thankful to have relief from the responsibility of her assumed undertaking, and to get rid of a burden which has become too bitter to be borne without complaint. Thus, sir, I answer the question of the occupation of Spain by the army of France. That occupation is an unpaid and unredeemed burthen to France. I say that France would be glad to get rid of the possession of Spain. I say, sir, that France would be very glad if England were to assist her to get rid of that possession. I say, that the only way to rivet France to the possession of Spain is, to make that possession a point of honour. I believe, sir, there is no other point upon which it is necessary to trouble the house with any explanation. I believe no other point has been adverted to by those honourable members who have so unequivocally and honourably supported this motion, and I should be ungrateful for their support if I were to detain the house with a single observation more than is absolutely necessary. (Hear, hear!) The object of this measure is not war. (Loud cheers.) I repeat, sir, that the object of this measure is not war. The object of this measure is to take the last chance of peace. (Continued cheers.) If England does not promptly go to the aid of Portugal, Portugal will be trampled down, and England will be disgraced, and then war will come, and come, too, in the train of degradation. If we wait until Spain have courage to ripen her secret machinations into open hostility, we shall have war, we shall have the war of the pacificators, and who can then say when that war will end? (The right honourable gentleman sat down amid loud cheers)."

Of this wonderful display of intellectual and moral power, and its immediate effect upon the audience, we have the following account from one who had the privilege of hearing it:

"Every body talking about war and Mr. Canning: the effect, the sensation, of his splendid speech is tremendous. The very suddenness of the business has aggravated the general ardour—Canning waited for the moment to strike, and then struck home, like Fabius in Ennius,

'Non ponebat enim rumores ante salutem,'

but waited for fact, and then came down armed with the consciousness of strength and moral indignation. It was an epoch in a man's life to have heard him; it reconciles me to the loss of several days hard running. Heavens! he surpassed even himself! the chaste elegance, the graceful simplicity, the harmonious tones of his opening speech, and the sublime energy of his reply, will haunt me to my grave. What a burst of feeling when he spoke of the Portuguese charter! 'May God prosper that attempt at the extension of constitutional liberty; and may the nation to which it is extended prove as fit to receive and cherish it, as she is to discharge her other duties among the nations of Europe.' I shall never forget the deep, moral earnestness of his tone, and the blaze of glory that seemed to light up his features. He was equally grand when, in his reply, he said, 'I do not believe that *there* is that Spain of which our ancestors were so justly jealous, that Spain upon whose territories it was proudly boasted that the sun never set.' But when, in the style and manner of Chatham, he said, 'I looked to Spain in the Indies, I called a *new* world into existence to redress the balance of the old,' the effect was actually terrific. It was as if every man in the house had been electrified. Tierney, who before that was shifting in his seat, and taking off his hat and putting it on again, taking large and frequent pinches of snuff, and turning from side to side, till he, I suppose, wore his breeches through, seemed petrified, and sat fixed, and staring with his mouth open for half a minute. Mr. Canning seemed actually to have increased in stature, his attitude was so majestic; I re-

marked his flourishes were made with the left arm; the effect was new and beautiful; his chest heaved and expanded, his nostril dilated, a noble pride slightly curled his lip; and age and sickness were dissolved, and forgotten in the ardour of youthful genius; all the while a serenity sat on his brow that pointed to deeds of glory. It reminded me and came up to what I've heard of the effects of Athenian eloquence. That Hume, to be so mad, so insensible, as to propose an amendment at such a time, to an inflamed, infuriated, glowing assembly! Even the reiterated laughter he occasioned did not atone for his folly; the very people in the gallery, reporters and all, disguised their contempt for him as little as their admiration of Mr. Canning. It was a glorious night."—*Diary of an M. P.*

The prompt decision of the measures resorted to by our government produced the results desired. There was not a moment's delay. The news which made known the imminent peril of our ancient ally arrived on the night of the 8th; the king's message was brought to the house (Sunday intervening) on the 11th; the discussion took place the following day; and early on the morning of the 14th our troops commenced their march.

At the funeral of his royal highness the Duke of York, which was attended by all the cabinet ministers, Mr. Canning caught a severe cold, which laid the foundation of the disease which so soon afterwards terminated his valuable life. This solemn ceremony was performed on the 20th of January, in the present year, 1827. Immediately afterwards Mr. Canning left Windsor for Bath, with the Earl of Liverpool. On Wednesday the 24th, he quitted Bath, and arrived the same evening at the seat of Mr. Huskisson, near Petworth, Sussex; from thence he went to Brighton, to attend a cabinet council; but his indis-

position assumed a serious aspect, and, instead of taking his place at the board, he was confined to his room. He was unable to be present at the meeting of parliament on the 8th; indeed, up to the 15th his state was considered dangerous. From the 16th he improved rapidly, and the papers of the 21st announced his convalescence. On the 17th, however, an event occurred, which placed the cabinet in a state of great embarrassment, and awakened, in connexion with the illness of Mr. Canning, melancholy speculations and forebodings with regard to the administration. This was the sudden and alarming indisposition of the Earl of Liverpool, who was seized with a fit of paralysis, and not expected to survive the night; he however rallied, but was politically dead from that moment. A more virtuous man, a more upright minister, than the Earl of Liverpool, never wielded the destinies of a nation. His talents were not of the highest order: he was neither Chatham, nor Chatham's son. But what he wanted in splendour, he made up in solidity. He ruled by the weight of his character. He had the caution of an experienced statesman, and the integrity of an honest man. His honour was never doubted, and his simple affirmation was invested with all the sacredness of an oath. He had one fault—it was hereditary: he was a tory. As soon as the nature of Lord Liverpool's attack was known, Mr. Peel went instantly to Brighton to consult his majesty. Mr. Canning, though living near the Pavilion, was too ill to join his colleague. Before he reached town the other members of the cabinet held frequent meetings; and it was rumoured, that there existed a strong disinclination to act under the right honourable gentle-

man, should his majesty appoint him to fill the situation of premier. On the 22d of February Mr. Canning was reported to be quite well, and had an audience of his majesty. The debate on the corn question, in the house of commons, had been twice postponed on his account. On Tuesday the 27th he came to town, and attended a cabinet council summoned by himself. On Thursday, March the 1st, he appeared in his place in the house, and moved for the committee on the corn laws. In committee he stated the propositions of government, as the expositor of the plan digested by the Earl of Liverpool, whose sudden illness he greatly deplored, especially as it deprived the house of the noble earl's invaluable assistance on the present important subject.

On the 6th of March he spoke at great length on the catholic question. He played off the artillery of his wit against Sir John Copley, the attorney-general, whose protestant zeal, on this occasion, had converted him into an alarmist of the school of Sir Harcourt Lees and Dr. Duigenan. "Since 1818," said Mr. Canning, "I have not meddled with the hopeless labour of devising securities that are sure to be rejected." He had contended, that all danger from foreign influence would be obviated, if the king had the power of nominating the catholic bishops.

"In Prussia," he observed, "this power prevails. The king of the Netherlands is in treaty for a similar power. So is the court of Saxony. But how do *they* obtain it? They go to the fountain-head—to the court of Rome. They have means which we have not. I saw in a popular book, that 'to correspond with the pope was high treason;' and therefore, when the pope addressed a letter to our gracious king, on being restored to his see, I took the advice of the law officers of the crown, who

were of opinion, that in answering the pope's letter I should incur a *premunire.*"

Mr. Canning read the opinion of Messrs. Gifford and Copley to this effect, amid loud shouts of laughter. Mr. Canning proceeded thus:

"I, being an ignorant person, looked into Burn's Justice, where I found that the penalties attached to a premunire were *merely* attainder, forfeiture of my goods, incapacity to bring actions, and that I might be slain by any one. As this is a matter touching life and fortune, I cannot be expected to go to the pope of Rome; and yet to the pope of Rome we must go, if we would have any security."

In this speech Mr. Canning defended the memory of Mr. Pitt, and said, "It was that minister's intention to carry the catholic question, and he (Mr. Canning) was ready to depose to the truth of that assertion before any tribunal." The motion was, however, lost by a majority of four. Mr. Canning's exertions on this question were followed by a relapse of his disorder, and he was again confined to his house.

The tone of this speech, and the manner in which Mr. Canning treated the master of the rolls, inflated the rumours about a change in the administration. It was understood that very serious dissensions prevailed in the cabinet; and the unusual delay in completing the arrangements, either for forming a new ministry, or filling up the vacancies in the old, proved that difficulties of no ordinary nature were felt by the royal mind. During this period every thing in the government remained *in statu quo*, and the public had no clue to guide it as to the intentions of the king. This general stillness was broken in upon, on Friday, March the 30th, when Mr. Tierney inquired in the

house, who was to be the dispenser of supplies about to be granted to government. Mr. Canning replied, "that a communication had been made to the friends of Lord Liverpool, that, although a painful act to the king, the chasm must be filled up; but he (Mr. Canning) could not pledge himself as to time." This latter declaration induced Mr. Tierney to press his motion, to postpone the vote of supply till the 1st of May. It was, however, lost by a majority of 153 to 80. On Saturday, March the 31st, the Duke of Rutland had an interview with the king; and it was said that his grace was authorised by certain peers to lay before his majesty their respectful determination not to support Mr. Canning, should his majesty, in the exercise of his prerogative, make that gentleman prime minister. The preference of his majesty, and the embarrassment in which he felt himself involved in his determination to gratify it, may be gathered from the fact, that Mr. Canning was first offered the premiership on condition that he should abandon his right to dictate church preferment. This of course Mr. Canning resolutely refused. At length the right honourable gentleman received his majesty's gracious commands to form an administration; and on April the 12th Mr. C. Wynn rose and said, "I move for a new writ for the borough of Newport (Isle of Wight); the right honourable George Canning having accepted the office of first commissioner of the treasury." The cheers of the house on this announcement were deafening. They were not, however, universal. Chagrin marked the brow of some, and consternation appeared in the countenance of others. But their numbers were insignificant. Mr. Canning was naturally de-

sirous of retaining his former colleagues, and of conspicuously distinguishing them in the new arrangements committed to his discretion. The following correspondence passed between him and the Duke of Wellington, prior to Mr. Wynn's public announcement.

Mr. Canning to the Duke of Wellington.

"My dear Duke,—I am commanded by his majesty to form a new administration. It will be a great satisfaction to me if your grace will consent to become a member of it.

"I am, &c.

"G. CANNING."

The Duke of Wellington to Mr. Canning.

"My dear Mr. Canning,—Before I reply to your letter, I wish to be informed who is to be the head of the new ministry, and which of my former colleagues are to form a part of it.

"I am, &c.

"WELLINGTON."

Mr. Canning to the Duke of Wellington.

"My Lord Duke,—After I had informed your grace that I had received his majesty's commands to form an administration, I am surprised that it should be inquired from me who is to be at the head of it. I am to be that person.

"I remain, &c.

"G. CANNING."

The Duke of Wellington to Mr. Canning.

"Sir,—I have only to say, in reply to your letter, that I cannot consent to become a member of the new administration.

"I remain, &c.

"WELLINGTON."

This correspondence was laid before the king; and the duke, under feelings of great irritation, sent in his resignation to his majesty; from whom he received a communication to the following effect:—

"The king receives the Duke of Wellington's resignation with the same sentiments of regret which his grace professes to feel in tendering it."

After the Duke of Wellington's resignation of the office of commander-in-chief, master of the ordnance, &c., which he had so lately attained, on the death of the Duke of York, the Lord Chancellor, Mr. Peel, and Lords Bathurst, Melville, and Westmoreland, also resigned. The sensation produced by these secessions it is impossible to describe.

The London Magazine for May thus introduces the information to its readers:

"Our worthy colleague, in his Diary of the Month, will no doubt acquaint those who are not already informed of it, that on the 12th of April, being the day before Good Friday, seven cabinet ministers struck work simultaneously, like so many journeymen tailors, in consequence of the appointment of Mr. Canning to the premiership. One of them, Lord Bexley, has since become (to employ the language of refractory workmen) a *dung*, and returned to his work, or rather to his idleness; for he enjoys a snug sinecure, which nothing but an access of extraordinary fury could have induced so pious a man to tempt Providence by relinquishing. The rest continue *flints*. *Tantœne*, as Mr. Canning would say, *Tantœne animis cœlestibus iræ!*

"*Musa, mihi causas memora.* What could have tempted seven ministers, grave reputable people, four of the seven certainly as little suspected of any exuberance of fancy or understanding as any men in the king's dominions; people far too stupid, it was supposed even for a freak like this; what could have tempted

them to throw their bread upon the waters, in the hope of seeing it again after many days? One of the newspapers called them the pillars of the state; and considering the manner in which pillars are employed in modern buildings, seldom ornamentally, never usefully, the simile was happy; and so commonly had they been considered as fixtures of this sort, that their secession excited scarcely less surprise than would be felt if some of the real pillars we have alluded to were to march from their pedestals, and make amends for their existence by breaking the heads of those who set them up.

"As far, too, as can be judged from outward circumstances, no punctilio need have forced them to this desperate step. Mr. Canning is not a young man, or a man low in office, thrust over the heads of his elders and superiors. He has been about thirty-five or six years in public life, and has long held offices next in rank to the highest; and especially for the three last years has held the second place in the ministry, in the opinion of the world, perhaps the first."

The new ministry were gazetted on the 27th of April. Four of Mr. Canning's colleagues kept their stations, or rather still remained in office; and the vacancies caused by the secessions were filled up by distinguished whigs*.

* The appointments were as follow:

Mr. Canning, first lord of the treasury, and chancellor of the exchequer.

Marquis of Anglesea, master of the ordnance.

Duke of Devonshire, lord chamberlain.

Duke of Portland, privy seal.

Lord Dudley, secretary for foreign affairs.

On the 30th of April, his majesty held a court at St. James's. Lords Eldon, Bathurst, and Westmoreland, and Mr. Peel, severally had audiences with his majesty, and resigned the seals of their respective offices. The new ministers also kissed hands on their appointments; and Messrs. Scarlett and Hart received the honours of knighthood. Mr. Canning, on going to and returning from court, was loudly and unanimously cheered by an assemblage far exceeding in numbers and respectability the crowd that usually surround the palace on such occasions. The Duke of Wellington was the only seceder who did not attend formally to resign his office.

This was a noble triumph both for the sovereign and the country. Both were, by the firmness* of one, delivered from the domination of men, who affected, indeed, to be the successors of Mr. Pitt, but who had not minds to comprehend his policy, or to follow up

Mr. Sturges Bourne, home department.
Mr. Robinson (created Lord Goderich), colonies.
Lord Harrowby, president of the council.
Lord Bexley, Lord Palmerston, Mr. Wynn, and Mr. Huskisson, } retained their stations.
Sir John Copley (created Lord Lyndhurst), lord chancellor.
Sir John Leach, master of the rolls.
Sir Anthony Hart, vice-chancellor.
Sir James Scarlett, attorney-general.

* The royal house of Brunswick has ever been distinguished by this quality. In this instance, and in the case of George the Third, it was a high degree of moral courage. When the oligarchy headed by Mr. Fox and Lord North presumed, like their modern successors, to assail the royal prerogative, by attempting unconstitutional means to drive Mr. Pitt from office, the conduct of his majesty set a glorious example to his illustrious successor. *See Tomline's Life of Pitt, Vol. I.*

any of his schemes of government. What was censurable in Mr. Pitt, what his warmest friends contemplated with regret, they imitated with admirable exactness. They had, in fact, the contortions of the sibyl without her inspiration. Pitt ruled by the ascendancy of his mighty genius; Castlereagh by the chapter of accidents. Mr. Pitt, however we differ from his politics, was a philosopher; Eldon a mere automaton of antiquated precedents: the one loved knowledge, the other holds it in infinite dread. In the vocabulary of the one it was science; in the nomenclature of the other it is innovation. Lord Eldon is the Mr. John Scott he was when he first emerged from the nursery. He looks at the world with the very same eyes, and is angry that it has undergone the least change since. But who can conceive that the William Pitt of 1790 would have been the William Pitt of 1827? Had *he* lived, experience would have corrected his views, and the improved state of the world would have opened before him glorious visions of the future. Mr. Canning, in one of his latter speeches, declared, that, in applying philosophy to politics, he only carried into effect Mr. Pitt's own declarations. "Minds for directing empires are the reverse of those which, narrowed by the drudgery of one dull pursuit, persuade themselves nothing under the skies can be right out of their accustomed orbit. Such persons, with unflinching obliquity of purpose, would force the destinies of the world into their own narrow and petty track. Inflated with the most vulgar of human vanities, they set themselves up as infallible guides for all time, as sovereign dictators to that genius, without which the statesman is no better than

the mill-horse, going the same round of office forms, and ending where he set out. It is the free unharnessed mind that must accomplish benefits for mankind; bound by no prejudices, linked to no one narrow pursuit, free to hold fast great truths, improve all available changes, and even sacrifice long-cherished predispositions, if they be found incompatible with sound philosophy. To foresee truly, and provide for the future, is the distinguishing characteristic of the higher order of the human intellect only—of the great spirits that are here and there scattered over the lapse of years, to lead mankind upwards, and to prevent retrocession." We are tempted to apply to Mr. Canning, and to his elevation, with its attendant circumstances, the fine observations of the author of De Vere. We have only to substitute Canning for Wentworth, and the application is complete, making some abatement of the high colouring in what relates to the early part of his career. "It is the observation of D'Alembert, that 'high office is like a pyramid; only two sorts of animals reach the top—reptiles and eagles.' He had scarcely ever served in subordinate office: he had always disdained what is called a patron; and from his entry into parliament he burst forth ten thousand strong. To the present height and summit of his fortune he had advanced, impelled by all the motives which could really make ambition virtue; a sincere love of country, a perfect disinterestedness, and a most ineffable contempt for all mean arts in the acquisition of power. He had advanced from his personal qualities and abilities alone; he represented no great families, and was the organ of no anomalous oligarchy that sought to control the king. At the same time, he had advanced through

the favour of the nation at large, as well as of his sovereign. By this, we do not mean what is vulgarly called the 'people,' but that which is really so; the majority of all ranks, forming a happy amalgamation of the numerous parties which had hitherto divided and afflicted the state. The necessity for new maxims of government had long been felt; and those who agreed in nothing else agreed in this, that a sincere regeneration was absolutely wanting to save the country from the progress of a corruption which was extending to its vitals. Mr. Wentworth," we rather say Mr. Canning, "seemed to unite all suffrages, in the hope which was now entertained, that he was destined to the accomplishment of this happy work. Proud and enviable situation! the holder of which is the real darling of history, before whom Cæsar and Alexander sink into nothing."

The union concentrated by Mr. Canning, to which perhaps, in some measure, he was driven by circumstances, was one of the most honourable and disinterested coalitions which Great Britain ever saw. The moderate men of the two great political parties consented, under him, to merge, in consideration of the general welfare, those few shades of speculative opinion upon which they differed. He was forsaken and ungenerously treated by his coadjutors, men as far behind him in intellect and genius as they were in true patriotic feeling. He had recourse for support to those who differed from him on political questions, much less than they who had so cavalierly attempted to expel him from the honourable post his sovereign had conferred upon him. Mr. Peel was the only man whose secession was of the smallest im-

portance in the country, and which the right honourable premier had any reason to regret. On the day after the court was held at St. James's, parliament met, and then commenced one of the pettiest oppositions that ever disgraced the country. Some of the late ministers and all their partizans indulged in low invective and personal abuse, which was retaliated with interest in the upper house by Lord King.

Mr. Peel explained the motives of his conduct, and defended his retiring colleagues by the following statement.

"The grounds on which I retired from office are simply these: I have taken, from the first moment of my public life, an active and decided part on a great and vital question—that of the extension of political privileges to the Roman catholics."

* * *

"For eighteen years I have constantly offered an uncompromising, but, I hope, a temperate, fair, and constitutional resistance to every proposition for granting any further concessions to them."

* * *

"My opposition is founded on principle. I think that the continuance of those bars which prevent the acquisition of political power by the catholics, is necessary for the maintenance of the constitution, and the interests of the established church. This being the broad, distinct, and intelligible ground which I have all along taken, I leave it to be judged by the country at large, whether or no there was any sufficient reason to induce me to acquiesce in an arrangement calculated to promote an object I have constantly and strenuously resisted. I saw no such reason, and therefore determined to retire from public service, should my right honourable friend be placed at the head of the treasury. Had his (Mr. Canning's) opinion on this question been changed, I should have been bound, from a rigid sense of public duty, to have accepted office under my right honourable friend's

administration, and to have kept myself free from any, even the most distant suspicion, of being actuated by private feelings."

* * *

"It is not merely that my right honourable friend differs in opinion from me on *this* important question, but that the change in the administration occasions the transfer of all that influence and power which belongs to the office of prime minister to the hands of one who will use it for the purpose of forwarding the object I have always resisted. It is not a transfer of that influence and power from one ordinary man to another ordinary man, but a transfer from the most able opponent of the catholic claims to their most zealous and eloquent advocate."

Speaking of his colleagues who had resigned, Mr. Peel said:

"The course pursued by each of those individuals is not only perfectly justifiable, but, with their impressions and views of public service, one which ought to be held up as a great and a splendid example to all public men.

"The charge of the late ministers having acted in concert, or in the spirit of cabal, is not only not true, but directly the reverse of truth. There might be the appearance of concert; because, in fact, there was no concert. If the late ministers had been base enough to concert and cabal against their sovereign, it is probable they would have been cunning enough to have taken care not to let him know it"

* * * *

"I never communicated with the Lord Chancellor as to the course I intended to pursue. I never opened my lips to him, until the day on which my right hon. friend was ordered by his majesty to reconstruct the administration. I knew not his lordship's intentions—his lordship was unacquainted with mine—and the same may, I believe, be said of every other member of the cabinet."

Mr. Peel's speech was received with the loudest cheers, and it was followed by an eulogium from

Mr. Brougham, that does equal honour to the heads and hearts of both of these great men.

Mr. Canning rose, amid loud cheers, and from his speech the following points are selected :—

"The house greatly mistakes my situation (said Mr. Canning), if they believe it is one of gratified ambition. From the beginning of the discussions on the catholic claims, I felt that our separation * was inevitable, and not far remote. Would to God, that I could now persuade myself, that my hon. friend's retirement will be but for a short time! Had the necessity which has made the resignation of one of us inevitable been left in my hands, my decision would have been in favour of my own resignation, and against that of my right hon. friend. The courtesy of my right hon. friend has induced him to acquaint me with his intention of speaking to-night. I have, therefore, consulted the will of my royal master, from whom I have obtained permission to publish such parts of the late negociations as are necessary for my vindication. True it is,—and why should I deny it? —I was called upon by his majesty for my advice, or rather, I ought to say, for my opinion, on the occasion alluded to. I did then, if I may presume to say it, give my counsel to the king, that his majesty ought, under the circumstances in which he felt himself placed, to make a government conformable to that lately conducted by the Earl of Liverpool. At the same time I laid my resignation at the feet of my sovereign."

* * *

"My first object was, to quit office; my next, to remain in it, with all my old colleagues, exactly upon the same terms as we have hitherto acted towards each other, upon this very catholic question."

* * *

"When I was charged with bringing in an undue proportion of members of the cabinet favourable to the catholic question, the hon. member forgot to state, that the protestant half of the cabinet had voluntarily thought proper to resign. Within

* *i. e.* Mr. Canning's and Mr. Peel's.

twenty-four hours, five of the anti-catholic members of the late cabinet, upon whose support I firmly reckoned, resigned. Is it, after that act of my late colleagues, that any honourable members, acquainted, too, with what had occurred, can fairly impute to me a wilful non-execution of the orders of my sovereign? But did my conduct end here? It was about the middle of Thursday, and two hours before the meeting of the house, when I had given directions for moving the new writ for myself, that I received these unexpected resignations; and, in consequence, I repaired to the king with them in my hand, and said, 'Sire, here see what disables me from executing your majesty's will. It is quite open for you still to take a new course of policy respecting the foundation of your government; nothing has yet been done which commits your majesty to any particular line of conduct; but I must fairly crave permission to state to you, that, if I am to go on in the formation of a new administration, my new writ must be moved for this night; for I cannot move on through the recess (Easter), without endeavouring to finish the business.' I will not presume to repeat the words which the king was graciously pleased to address to me on that occasion; suffice it to say, his majesty gave me his hand to kiss, and my writ was instantly made out, to be used on that evening."

* * *

Mr. Canning concluded this manly and ingenuous speech with these words:

"In the year 1822, I was appointed to an office fraught with wealth, honour, and ambition. From that office I was called, not only not on my own seeking, but contrary to my own wish, and I made a sacrifice—a sacrifice, be it remembered, of no inconsiderable nature to a poor man; and the offer of a share in the administration was made to me,—so help me, God!—without any stipulation. But, if that offer had been made—(as it should have been, if I was to have been ousted now)—if that offer had been made with this condition, that if the highest place in the administration should become vacant, I was to recollect that the opinion which I held on the catholic question was to be a bar to my succeeding to it; I would have turned the

offer back with the disdain with which I turned back that of serving under a protestant premier, (using the term protestant in the familiar manner in which we are accustomed to use it), as the badge of my helotism, and the condition of my place."

The following day, in the upper house, the Duke of Wellington spoke with much more vehemence, and at much greater length than was his grace's wont. His leading observations were as follow:

"It is no answer to my view of the subject to tell me, that the present cabinet act upon the same principles with that of which Lord Liverpool had been at the head. I say, that the two cabinets materially differ, and the chief difference between them is this: that the cabinet of Lord Liverpool was founded on the principle of maintaining the laws as they now are; whilst that of the right hon. gentleman is founded on the principle of subverting them. Those who formed part of Lord Liverpool's cabinet know well what it was to which they pledged themselves; for they know that his lordship was conscientiously opposed to all changes in the existing form of government. But those who coalesce with the right hon. gentleman have no idea how far their coalition will carry them. The right hon. gentleman is the most able, active, and zealous partisan of those changes with which the country is at present threatened. The principles of the noble earl were principles by which any man might safely abide: the principles of the right hon. gentleman fluctuate every day.

"I understand that the right hon. gentleman states to his personal friends, that my letter to him of the 10th instant, in which I inquired who was at the head of government, gave him great offence; and I, therefore, wish the point to be fully examined before your lordships, in order that you may see whether any thing was then done by me which could justify him in taking offence. I must here inform your lordships, that early in the month of April, I cannot precisely mention the day, I had a conversation with the right hon. gentleman, in which he stated to me, that in case his majesty should desire him to reconstruct the government, one of his plans was to recommend

that Mr. Robinson, then chancellor of the exchequer, should be called up to your lordship's house, and should be made first lord of the treasury; and I confess to your lordships that it was my intention, if I had heard anything more of that scheme, to have proposed such a modification of it as would have kept the members of the old administration together. I mention this to your lordships, in order that you may see that the language of my first note was founded on this previous communication to me."

Lord Bexley said:

"He was induced again to resume office by the assurances he had received, that the line of policy adopted in the administration of Lord Liverpool would not be abandoned."

Lord Melville said:

"I estimate highly the talents of my right hon. friend; but I confess I do not think he can form an efficient government, such as the exigency of the country requires, if stripped of his old associates. I stated my opinion, that he was not an adequate substitute, (and I stated it without meaning to convey the slightest offence,) to carry on the same prudent, able, and useful superintendence which Lord Liverpool had; and that the remaining portion of the government would, notwithstanding the splendid talents of my right hon. friend, be unequal to the task of governing this country."

The Duke of Wellington, the late Lord Chancellor, and the Lords Melville and Westmoreland, severally denied having acted in concert.

Other noble lords spoke upon the subject with less temperance than the principal parties aggrieved. The Marquis of Londonderry said:

"I do not go to a bookseller's to have *my* speeches reprinted; and, if I were to do so, I would not retract one sentence of what I have now uttered."

His lordship alluded to the publication of Mr. Can-

ning's speech on the affairs of Portugal, which differed materially from the speech as delivered in the house.

The Earl of Winchelsea said of Mr. Canning:

"In him consistency was never observable; ambition and *love of place* have been the pivots on which his whole political life turned."

On the 3d of May, the discussions in the lower house were more in the spirit of warfare than on the preceding Tuesday. General Gascoyne, who had given notice of a motion regarding the shipping interest, was interrupted by a Mr. G. Dawson, who said, he had a question of considerable importance to ask, but that he did not see the chancellor of the exchequer in his place. After some discussion between Mr. Huskisson, Mr. Dawson, and the general, the latter gentleman agreed to give place to Mr. Dawson for five minutes. At this instant, Mr. Canning entered, and was loudly cheered. Mr. Dawson then asked,

"Whether any arrangement had been made for filling up the offices of master of the mint, judge-advocate, and surveyor-general of the woods and forests?"

Mr. Canning rose to reply, amid a breathless silence, uttering only the monosyllable "Yes," in a tone impossible to describe, and resumed his seat, amid the cheers and laughter of the house. Mr. Dawson then proceeded, though clearly out of order, to discuss the new arrangements. One of his assertions was as follows:

"I look at the conduct of the right hon. gentleman at the head of affairs as having been dictated by no other motive than the gratification of his own personal ambition; and, disagreeable as it may be to the right hon. gentleman to hear it, and

disagreeable as it is for me to utter it, I tell the right hon. gentleman, that he has not been over scrupulous as to the means by which his ambitious course has been pursued."

Mr. Brougham replied in a sarcastic and eloquent speech, and was followed by Mr. Canning, who spoke to order. With regard to Mr. Dawson, he said:

"I can assure the honourable gentleman, I feel towards him no personal malice. I am too old a stager not to be able to bear this attack without resentment; I have had to endure the assaults of those benches (the opposition) when filled by other persons of a quality which I am not likely soon again to experience.

"I have received no hint of the purpose of the honourable gentleman, and cannot imagine how the production of the patent for appointing the judge-advocate, can have the effect *of satisfying his anxiety*, unless it is according to the old Cambridge question—that by taking the masts and guns of the ship, and dividing by the men, you can get at the name of the captain."

After Mr. Peel and Sir Francis Burdett had spoken, Mr. Canning again awakened the attention of the house. He said:

"I beg leave to assure the honourable gentleman opposite, that I heartily rejoice that the standard of opposition is now fairly unfurled; this is better than a thousand neutralities; and I trust that wherever the sentiments of opposition have found a lurking place, they will come boldly forward."

Loud cheers from Mr. Canning's party followed this: when they had subsided, he proceeded:

"There are two questions to which I wish to reply. I have been asked what I intend to do with the question of parliamentary reform, when it is brought forward? What do I intend to do with it? Why, oppose it, as I have invariably done during the whole of my parliamentary career. What do I intend to do with the test act? Oppose it." (*Cheers from all parties*).

After reading Mr. Canning's speeches on the catholic question, in which he pleads for unrestricted liberty of conscience, in which he condemns all civil proscriptions on a purely religious account, we are totally at a loss to understand the grounds on which, consistently, he could have resisted the repeal of the test act. We, of course, understand him as declaring, that he would oppose, not the act itself, but all measures employed in parliament to blot it out from the statute book. If six millions of catholics are to be restored to the full and perfect enjoyment of their civil rights, upon what principle, we ask, are two millions of dissenters, who have ever proved themselves loyal subjects of the king, and peaceful members of society, to be held in bondage, and to be denied the privilege of holding the meanest office in the state? How many evils do they suffer, not only from the penal laws themselves, but from the spirit of petty persecution which their existence generates? And what possible evil, either to church or state, could result from their repeal?

The next day the Marquis of Londonderry was *delivered* as follows. Our readers will excuse the ambitious and ornamental in the style. A senator in a British house of peers ought to cultivate the higher branches of oratory.

"When I look at the building which has been erected, I find it divested of all its main pillars, and it is composed now of *a sort of rubbish.* The artificer has certainly been dexterous in forming the building with respect to its durability! Could he have found out such a mass of rubbish in any other quarter, formed as it was by the two parties? The artificer has made a dexterous endeavour to un-whig a part of the whigs, and untory a part of the tories."

Lord Goderich replied to his noble friend,

"For so (said his lordship) I will still call him, though he has been pleased to designate me as part of the rubbish."

And the marquis explained that he applied that term to the new ministers only, and not to those who had formerly been members of the administration.

Lord King said:

"Allusion having been made to a building, I will explain the term 'rubbish.' Any person practically acquainted with building must know, that *what is sent away* from the building is the *rubbish*."

On a subsequent occasion, that veracious nobleman, the Duke of Newcastle, so famous on a certain celebrated trial, for deciding on *ex parte* evidence, declared, that "Mr. Canning was the most profligate minister that ever was in power." Such censure is praise. The cabals, the calumnies, the secret influence, the open hostility, which were in perpetual operation against the new premier, combined with the incessant cares of government, visibly affected his health. He opened his budget on the first of June, as chancellor of the exchequer. Nothing of importance occurred during the sitting of parliament; and the recess Mr. Canning employed in issuing orders to the heads of the different departments to transmit to him accurate and detailed accounts of the expenses of their several establishments, the salaries of officers, &c., with a view to the reduction of the burthens of the people. On the 15th of July Mr. Canning was seriously indisposed, but a few days enabled him again to attend to his public duties. These he resumed on the 19th, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his medical attendants. The following day he retired to the seat of the Duke of Devonshire, at

Chiswick. On the 25th he came to town, to transact business at Downing-street, and afterwards, with his lady, dined at the house of the Marquis of Clanricarde. At table, however, he complained of weakness, and immediately after dinner returned to Chiswick. On the 6th of August his danger became extreme; on the 8th he expired, at the age of fifty-seven.

Mr. Canning's disorder was an inflammation of the kidneys. Twenty-four hours had elapsed before the physicians had a consultation, and by that time the inflammation had extended to the peritoneal coat of the intestines, and no treatment could mitigate its severity. From the intestines, the inflammation proceeded to the diaphragm, which separates the cavity of the abdomen from that of the thorax, and attacked first the lungs, and then the liver; and after the right hon. gentleman had endured pain almost unparalleled in human suffering, the whole internal frame became insensible, and he sunk away under the effects of gangrene. It is absolutely impossible to imagine death to be accompanied by more excruciating pain than Mr. Canning suffered; it was absolutely worse than if he had been severed limb by limb, or tortured as the American Indians were used to torture their unfortunate prisoners; but though, while his physical strength failed, his groans were most affecting, that mind which had never quailed to a political antagonist remained in its moments of consciousness firm to the last.

Mr. Canning seems to have had a presentiment of the fatal termination of his illness. A correspondent of a country journal* says, "His constitution had been much shaken by a violent attack of cold in the spring.

* The Tyne Mercury.

At dinner (about eight weeks before his death) Mr. Canning looked care-worn and enfeebled; but as the session was approaching to its close, his friends fondly looked forward to a period of comparative repose, which might gradually repair his shattered constitution. But how little repose is ever in reserve for the prime minister of the king of England! Mr. Canning had always shown me particular kindness, from the recollection of which I now derive a melancholy consolation: and on that evening, as his guests departed, I remained accidentally last in the room, and when I wished him 'Good night, and farewell,' he asked 'When I left town?' 'In three days.' 'Ah!' said he, 'so soon? Then, good bye; *I shall not see you again.*' I shook him tenderly by the hand, and said, 'God bless you, sir;' for as I looked in his pensive though beaming countenance, I marked the impression which disease had left, and care had fixed, upon his 'faded cheek,' yet under 'brows of dauntless courage and considerate pride,' and the sad thought darted across my mind that perhaps, indeed, I should not see him again."

Some curious coincidences may be remarked in the latter days of Mr. Fox and Mr. Canning. About the middle of June, 1806, a few months after having formed an administration, of which he was the head, Mr. Fox made his last appearance in parliament. In August, he was with difficulty removed to the villa of the Duke of Devonshire, at Chiswick, where, after undergoing sundry operations, he soon afterwards breathed his last, aged 57 years some months. He was buried in a vault in Westminster Abbey, near the remains of his great rival, Pitt. At the latter end of June, 1827,

also a few months after having been appointed the head of the administration, Mr. Canning made his last appearance in parliament. Illness assuming a still more serious aspect, Mr. Canning was invited by the Duke of Devonshire to reside at his fine villa at Chiswick, in the hope that change of air might renovate health. He there soon afterwards breathed his last; about Mr. Fox's age, dying, it is mentioned, in the same room in which Mr. Fox expired.

Mr. Canning was interred in Westminster Abbey, on the 16th of August. His funeral was private, though awaited in the abbey by a numerous body of friends, who were accommodated with tickets, and were formed into two lines along the great aisle, through which the funeral procession passed on its way to the north transept, the entire of which was matted. When those who had formed portions of the procession passed the gate leading into the passage to the burial-place, it was closed by the undertaker's men, notwithstanding the rush made by those in the aisle to enter with them. At a subsequent time, however, they were all admitted. Among others were Lord Duncannon, his venerable father the Earl of Besborough, the Earl of Limerick, the Earl of Clare, Mr. Spring Rice, the new under secretary of state (who came expressly from Limerick to attend the funeral), Sir Francis Burdett, Sir J. Mackintosh, Lord W. Bentinck, Lord F. L. Gower, Mr. T. Moore, Dr. Goodenough, Dr. Philpotts, Mr. Easthope, M. P., the Right Honourable Maurice Fitzgerald, the president of the board of control, the chairman of the East India company, Lord Fife, Sir Robert Wilson, Mr. Creevey, Mr. Wilmot Horton, the attorney-general, the solicitor-general, &c. &c.

As the coffin was brought a little in advance, a strong interest was created by the juvenile appearance of Mr. Canning's son, who seemed about thirteen years of age, and who stood absorbed in grief behind the coffin of his father. The body had been received at the gate by the very reverend the Dean of Westminster, Dr. Ireland, and the reverend Mr. Bentinck. The whole procession now moved slowly and solemnly up the aisle in the following order:—

Marshal, Mutes, Pursuivants,
The Very Rev. the Dean of Westminster, accompanied by the Rev. Mr. Bentinck.
THE BODY.
The youthful son of Mr. Canning,
Supported on the right by his Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence, and on the left by the Duke of Portland, and his Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex.
Lord Clanricarde (Mr. Canning's son-in-law), accompanied by Mr. Stapleton (Mr. Canning's private secretary).
The Earl of Carlisle, the Marquis of Stafford, and Earl Morley.
The Marquis of Conyngham, the Duke of Devonshire, the Marquis of Anglesea, and Lord Leveson Gower.
The Lord Chancellor, Lord Goderich, the Marquis of Lansdown, and Mr. Tierney.
Lord Bexley, Lord Dudley, and Lord Palmerston.
Mr. Sturges Bourne, Sir George Cockburn, and Mr. Backhouse.

It was a truly affecting spectacle to watch and witness the deep expression of sorrow which was settled on the countenances of all who encompassed the grave at this moment of mournful interest. It was not the "mockery of woe;" it was not the outward expression of unfelt regret, it was not an ostentatious grief; but the most noble and the most estimable men in the

land were seen marshalled in unaffected and reverential sorrow around the mortal remains of the most illustrious statesman of modern times. The mourners—the ministers—the foreign ambassadors—and, indeed, all (with scarcely an exception) who joined in the procession, were suffused in tears. There was scarcely one among the numerous throng by whom the illustrious deceased was not remembered by some endearing recollection of relationship, of friendship, of service, or of kindness.

The coffin, in which were enclosed the remains of the late premier, was covered with scarlet cloth. There was no unnecessary display of ornaments. The arms of the right honourable gentleman were inscribed on it, and below the following inscription:

"DEPOSITUM.

The Right Honourable GEORGE CANNING, one of his Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, First Lord Commissioner of his Majesty's Treasury, Chancellor and Under Treasurer of the Exchequer of Great Britain and Ireland, one of the Governors of the Charter-House. Born the 11th of April, 1770. Died the 8th of August, 1827."

The whole ceremony was of the simplest character. There was nothing about it which, to the eye of a stranger, would indicate that the minister of a great empire was now consigned to the earth. The noblest and mightiest in the land were present; but they seemed to have appropriately divested themselves of the attributes and appearances of rank and nobility, and become for the time undistinguished from their fellow-citizens. The vault in which Mr. Canning lies is very narrow, and is barely sufficient for the coffin. It is

about seven feet long, in breadth two feet and a half, and in depth nearly eight. The sides of the vault are constructed of brick-work. The site it occupies in the north transept is precisely at the foot of the grave of Mr. Pitt, from which it is only separated by a slight partition of about nine inches.

The right honourable gentleman, amidst the sorrows of a whole nation, has left to bemoan his loss, and to cherish his memory, his widow, to whom he had been married twenty-eight years; a daughter, married to the Marquis of Clanricarde, in 1825; and two sons, one a captain in the navy, and the other a student at Eton.

At the moment this lamentable event happened, the illustrious deceased was just beginning to witness the success of his measures, and to receive the well merited reward of applause from his fellow-citizens. He had shown how a minister might unite in himself the confidence of the crown and people; and had elevated his name in a very short period to a pitch of renown which few ministers in our national history have been enabled to attain. It is from this height that we are to view him, and to dismiss from our minds what he was when in a subordinate situation: his powers were circumscribed in a ministry, the members of which were far below him in capacity. For his political errors, arising from his political associations, we have this apology to make. Throughout his career, be it remembered, he laboured under those disadvantages which attend every man who has his fortune to make by politics. "Such a man can seldom have the power—a power without which no statesman can escape occasional compromise—of withdrawing himself from the arena of public life, when he can no longer appear on it with perfect con-

sistency and dignity. He has no stake in the country, no station, no ground to fall back upon. He may support government, or he may oppose it; but he must be in action, or he is nothing. To a man so circumstanced politics can hardly be a pleasurable pursuit; and certainly in Mr. Canning's case, beyond whatever may be the enjoyment of gratified ambition, it was by no means a very profitable one. If he had gone to the bar, as he purposed to do in early life, he would have made a large fortune; probably have become lord chancellor; certainly, if it be true (which we believe) that his exertions have cost him his life, he has purchased dearly, by a death at fifty-seven, more than all the honours and emoluments that the state has bestowed upon him. The personal habits of the late premier were not lavish; and the fortune of which he died possessed is considerably less than that which he acquired by his marriage. As the country has been told, five hundred thousand times over, of pensions and annuities granted to his 'mother and sisters,' it may be as well to observe, that no statesman's relatives or connexions ever received less from the purse of the public. His eldest son, Captain Canning, is captain of a man-of-war, and at the time of his death was stationed in the Black Sea. This is not a very unreasonable provision for the eldest son of a prime minister." We have extracted the above sentiments from a popular journal, and they indisputably prove, that filthy lucre, the loaves and fishes, were not the food for Mr. Canning's ambition; and to whatever we are to ascribe his political aberrations, they are not to be traced to a mercenary source. We refer especially to the right honourable gentleman's will, a copy

of which will be found in the appendix. In private and domestic life he was little less than adored. His filial attentions to his mother speak volumes for the excellence of his heart. He visited her at Bath, where she resided, as often as the public business allowed him, and never failed to write to her every Sunday of his life. It has been well and truly observed, that a good son cannot be a bad man. A writer in *The New Monthly Magazine* thus describes the person and manners of Mr. Canning:

"Some time ago, when Mr. Canning was in the prime of life, between forty and fifty years of age, the writer of this had the good fortune to meet him in private society. He was on a visit at the house of a nobleman, one of his staunchest friends and supporters. It was the first and last time he ever had so close an opportunity of observing Mr. Canning, and of knowing that in private society he fully sustained, as he did in public, his general superiority over those around him. In his person there were no extremes. His dress was plain, but in thorough good taste. In most things he seemed to partake of the character of his eloquence; open and manly, conscious of power, and consequently simple and unpresuming. He was at that time what might be called a 'very handsome man;' tall, well made, his form moulded between strength and activity. Latterly he exhibited marks of what years, care, and ambition had done upon him; but at the period spoken of, he had not gone so deeply into the anxieties of political life, or the vigour of earlier years enabled him to combat their effects better. His countenance beamed with intellect, and bore a cast of firmness; yet a mild and good-natured expression lay over all. His head

was even then bald as the 'first Cæsar's;' his forehead lofty and capacious; his eye reflective, but at times lively; and his whole countenance expressive of the kindlier affections, of genius, and of intellectual vigour. The elaborateness of his eloquence, indeed, was not visible in his carriage in the drawing-room, nor his somewhat theatrical manner of delivering his parliamentary speeches. His gait, as he paced the carpet, was natural, and wholly free of constraint. He seemed reserved rather than communicative; he spoke quick; his voice full in tone, harmonious, and clear. He was on the point of setting out for Liverpool, to become a candidate for its representation, and it is probable that his mind was then fully occupied with the business of the moment. Men of a particular class in society in this country resemble each other so much in external manners, owing to the levelling effect of a similarity of education and the same air of good breeding, that in an assembly of a dozen or two individuals it is difficult to discover any one mentally superior to another from a few minutes' observation of the person. No one who had seen Mr. Canning in such a situation would have hesitated to designate him as a remarkable man, even if he had never before heard of him; and yet without being able to define why he did so. The fine manly beauty of his head and countenance, the absence of affectation in his general demeanour, and the gracefulness of his manner, were unequalled among his contemporaries. But when he spoke, his superiority became decidedly evident; the happiness of his expression and easy flow of his language irresistibly fixing the stranger's attention.

"In private life he was unostentatious, and accessible

to the humblest individual. No man was ever further removed from presumption or vanity. He loved simplicity, and was gentle and affable to those about him, and of a generous but sober disposition. At times, it is true, upon occasions of officious interruption, or on a sudden wounding of his feelings, he exhibited that irritability so constantly the attendant on genius, for he was exquisitely sensitive; but on no occasion was the smallest unkindness ever wantonly inflicted by him upon others. He has indeed been charged with ambition, as if it were a crime. If ambition be a crime, honourable ambition, he must be deemed guilty in common with all the loftier spirits that have appeared among mankind. To such every improvement of man's condition and every refinement man enjoys is owing—every thing exalted above vulgar sense and the unimaginative, plodding, animal instinct of the species. That he had committed political errors must be admitted, but he is entitled to those palliations which would be due to others in such a situation as that in which he was placed, and to circumstances which he often could not himself govern. A proof of this is, that when he possessed the power he did not conceal the will. It is pleasing to reflect that he then deferred to the right side, and appealed to public opinion—not indeed to the opinion of the mob, any more than that of the would-be dictators both to the throne and subject, but to the aggregate intellect of the country—not to the 'froth' or the 'dregs,' but to the pure and healthy portion of the goblet's contents."

It is interesting to trace the progress of Mr. Canning in his public career. It was at its close that he became the legislator of experience—not the puny and

trammelled experience of a statesman by trade, who trembles at any change in the tricks which he has been taught, or the routine in which he has been accustomed to move; but an experience, liberal and enlightened, which bears the testimony of ages and nations, and collects from it the general principles which regulate the mechanism of society. Though party introduced him into the senate, the constitution of his mind, as he became matured in years, preserved him in the happy medium between the extremes of party violence. As a minister, he was neither behind nor before the age in which he lived; therefore, he was not disposed to drag it backwards by his antiquated opinions, nor to impel it forwards to measures of change for which it was unprepared. Mr. Canning was not naturally a man prone to extremes. Circumstances and inexperience placed him at the ultra point of despotism. He was a violent tory at the beginning, but he lived in a country of freedom, where liberal principles were diffused. By these he was insensibly influenced, but he was never hurried by his feelings into visionary schemes and experiments. He had no natural alliance either with the tory or whig aristocracy, and he dreaded popular frenzy and delusion. Determined to uphold the constitution, he would have contemplated with horror any attempt to alter its basis or change its character. When he found that the toryism of his youth threatened the subversion of this glorious fabric, he abandoned its ultra peculiarities. He considered power as a trust reposed in him for the public good. Instead of growing despotic in proportion to the elevation to which he was gradually raised by the voice of the people, and the favour of his sovereign, he exhibited

the rare example of increasing moderation and liberality. His views enlarged with his sphere of influence; and when he reached the summit of his ambition, he was prepared to wield the powers of the state with the strenuous arm of a man formed for the times in which he appeared destined to act so conspicuous a part. He conciliated his former political opponents, and, without yielding to their dictation, availed himself of their assistance. He was not properly a whig, but he was not unwilling that a strong infusion of whiggism should neutralize the leaven of toryism, when he saw that its fermentation was likely to endanger the safety and prosperity of his country. If, as a statesman, his mind was not of the very highest order, he was incomparably the best man of business, and the most effective public orator of his age. The long concealed, but sudden ebullition of the hatred of his former colleagues was highly favourable to the development of his genuine principles, and tended to give them firmness and stability. Party made him an eloquent debater; experience made him a liberal statesman; and, welcomed by the voice of his sovereign and the people, he became a high-minded and patriotic minister. Of his domestic and foreign policy we have already spoken. Had not Mr. Canning taken his seat in the cabinet on the death of the Marquis of Londonderry, the measures contemplated by that nobleman would, no doubt, have been persevered in by his colleagues. Then insurrection acts, banishments, and all the rigour of an inquisition, must have gone on, till they could go no farther, and desolation closed the drama. The late policy was wholly Mr Canning's; assented to, and sup-

ported in some degree, by Lord Liverpool, but contemned by most of those who went out of office on Mr. Canning's appointment to the premiership. Some of those measures were suggested long ago by members of the then opposition, and portions of them were carried through parliament by Mr. Huskisson and Mr. Peel; but the spirit of the policy was Mr. Canning's, and he was supported in these his measures by the opposite side, now with and in administration.

"It was the deceased premier who was the life-spring of all, whose penetrating mind foresaw that to stand still was ruinous; that other nations, now peace had given them security from interruption, would manufacture in a little time as well as ourselves; that other countries will not remain idle that they may receive the products of British industry, and pay hard money for that with which they can supply themselves. Mr. Canning foresaw that this change must be met by carrying into effect the dictates of sound judgment, not the narrow exclusive views of interested clamour. The principle of reciprocal benefit could alone secure to us our commerce, and keep up a demand which would incite us to perfect new articles of manufacture, to replace the deficiencies that must inevitably arise in the consumption of those in which other nations were gaining upon us. We might thus have the start in new branches of industry, successively taking the lead in them, and profiting by them, until the increasing skill of other nations again led us to open fresh sources of commercial wealth. He saw that new markets must be found as old ones were closed, and that infant countries were ever most advantageous to commerce; he therefore,

from true policy, gave such infant communities the support of England, that he might thereby enrich her. His cabinet opponents would have had things left as they were; but Mr. Canning saw and felt the effect of the truism, that 'nothing stands still,' reasoned profoundly upon it, and acted accordingly."

South America, Portugal, and Greece, supply proofs that his conduct was in unison with public opinion, and that the latter agreed with sound policy. We quote the following striking passage from Mr. Campbell's journal, to which we are already so much indebted, not only on account of its eloquence, but of its truth:

"Mr. Canning only effected earlier that which time at a later and less beneficial era would have itself effected; but it is this which marks the genius of the man. They who attempt to rob him of his just glory, or to decry those principles, to the expediency of which the better part of the country assented, must have something more than the hardihood of common ignorance to bear them out. These, however, are but one portion of the opponents of Mr. Canning. The bulk of the clergy of this country were, it is to be regretted, among the number; they who were once the lights of their time, the learned and most intellectual of their age. But they have stood still in the race of knowledge, and suffered the community to pass them. Knowledge has no line of demarcation, more than commerce, which will permit men to sit down and suppose themselves at the *ne plus ultra* of accumulation. Such, however, is the supposition of those who, being the depositaries of knowledge as it stood fifty years ago, imagine the world has acquired nothing since, and judge as they would have done at that time,

applying the same rules to every thing. That they should support the measures of Mr. Canning, when they were themselves so much in arrear in the comprehension of the principles upon which he acted, might not be expected; but that they should pertinaciously oppose him because their exclusive body, out of all the world, could not understand them, is a 'little too bad.' The conduct of a large portion of 'the order' to Mr. Canning is more comprehensible. They had not the sin of knowledge to answer for, and might plead ignorance. They had naturally a repugnance to a reign of intellect, and, still worse, plebeian intellect. They preferred an administration selected from among their own dependents. Hence it was that most intellectual and equitable of peers, the Duke of Newcastle, pronounced Mr. Canning the most 'profligate' minister the country had seen. Hence it was that the bitterest system of annoyance possible was carried on against him. They deemed the choice of the minister, the places, pensions, and property of the nation, their hereditary right; to control them for their own advantage, or that of their dependents. Confidence in their security and long possessions made them believe the property of others their own. They must be taught better."

"There was in Mr. Canning," says the same eulogy, "a dauntlessness and fortitude that very few have possessed. He could look danger in the face unshrinkingly, with a full knowledge of its extremest perils. The same quality aided him in his deliberations and decisions upon public questions: what he thought right he dared to do. He was a sincere, straightforward, fearless man; often not comprehended, because men above the common level rarely are."

The following fine character of his eloquence must close our quotations from one of the best prose writers and poets of the age.

"The eloquence of Mr. Canning was of a high order, singularly elaborate and correct for one of his poetical temperament. It was a stream of pure unadulterated English, flowing copiously with classic elegance, seldom assisted by those elevated flights of passionate declamation, and never degraded by those meannesses of phraseology or metaphor, which have been observed occasionally in the speeches of our higher class of orators. In England, as the case has been in all free nations, eloquence is highly valued. There the art of swaying an audience, and impressing great truths by a public speaker, has grown into a repute not ill-merited, if its consequences in encouraging the open discussion of political measures be duly considered. Where so many good speakers are found, it is therefore no little glory to shine pre-eminent. Mr. Canning was our first living orator. He was somewhat studied in language, yet lucid. He had a deep intonation, and a candid and manly delivery. He possessed great power, though in this respect alone he was inferior to Mr. Brougham. He was for the most part in full possession of himself, his style highly refined, and he made a great impression on his hearers. His logic was never confused, or his resources common-place, like those of Mr. Peel. It may be doubted, however, whether the elegant musical flow of his language, bordering upon fastidious correctness, or the arguments clothed in it, would alone have obtained him the celebrity he deservedly obtained. He possessed a quality which was peculiarly well adapted to render him attractive to an

English audience: his speeches, though so correct and elegant, being generally unmingled with spirit-stirring paroxysms of declamation, might seem tame to coarse and unpolished ears. This quality was a happy wit, and of a species peculiarly his own. With this wit he seasoned his oratory, irresistibly fixed the attention of his hearers, and turned his opponents into ridicule. Nothing is so difficult as to define different kinds of wit, or wherein one kind differs from another. Negatively, Mr. Canning's was nothing like the ironical humour of Tierney, nor the strong and brilliant light that flashed from Sheridan's ever-ready fancy. It was peculiarly his own, varied, always agreeable, and seldom severe; it was lively, playful, and directed to ridicule rather than lacerate. Sometimes it consisted of no more than a dexterous use of alliterative words; at others, of a sly, happy allusion, and often of keen satire. He dazzled and confused his opponent rather than wounded him, unless when he chose to be strongly sarcastic. In argument he almost always conceded what was undeniable in fact and clear to an unprejudiced mind, not glossing it over or leaving it untouched. He took his stand of defence upon one specious and often unanswerable objection, while his ministerial coadjutors, in their over-zeal, put falsehood and truth upon a level, without conscience or discrimination. Thus Mr. Canning long ago obtained a reputation for candour from his opponents which they denied to his associates. If the question were one of borough corruption and reform (for example), while his colleagues asserted all was as it should be, perfect and pure, Mr. Canning granted that the evils complained of existed; that the representation was not so perfect as it might be made; but he opposed the

sweeping change required, because the evil that existed was less than that which would accrue in endeavouring to administer a remedy. In his speeches he was not sparing of the figures of rhetoric, yet, when he used them, they were happily brought in. One of these felicitous figures occurs at this moment: he is speaking of the disturbance of the 'radicals' in the north, and of their being encouraged by his political opponents; 'Vain and hopeless enterprise, to raise a spirit of discontent, and then to govern it! They may stimulate the steeds into fury, till the chariot is hurried to the brink of a precipice; but do they flatter themselves that they can then leap in, and, hurling the incompetent driver from his seat, check the reins just in time to turn from the precipice and avoid the fall? I fear they would attempt it in vain. The impulse once given may be too impetuous to be controlled; and, intending only to change the guidance of the machine, they may hurry it and themselves to inevitable destruction.' Notwithstanding what has been said of the easy flow and elegance of his delivery, he was sometimes vehement in his manner. When deeply in earnest, he assumed a port which gave out the whole character of his ardent mind; he flung his utmost soul into his words, and seemed alive only to the truth and importance of what he spoke, and of the consequences dependent upon it. Those who heard him alone on ordinary questions can hardly conceive the effect of one of the rare, and therefore perhaps more impressive, outpourings of his eloquence upon such occasions. The serenity of his brow, during the passionate earnestness of his appeals, imparted additional weight to its influence, by giving the idea of innate strength—of that repose which is

imaged in the rock when the tempest is around it. Yet he could flit over his opponent's arguments as lightly as a sunbeam on the waters, equally master of the jocular and the serious, of the playful and the severe."

The literary productions of Mr. Canning are merely specimens of his attainments, and the natural bent of his mind. He never intended that they should form the basis of his reputation. He was the best writer in the Anti-jacobin, the best essayist in the Microcosm, the master spirit in the Loves of the Triangles, and a satirist not inferior to Gifford in his New Morality. In fact, he was every thing he chose to be. Lord Byron did not err when he said, "Canning is a genius, almost an universal one; an orator, a wit, a poet, and a statesman."

One other liberal testimony, the tones of which, like melancholy yet sublime music, have been wafted to us from across the Atlantic, to soothe and exalt us at the same moment, and we have done. It is that fine eulogy on our departed statesman, pronounced in congress by the president of the United States, Quincey Adams, Esq.

"He was a Briton through and through. British in his feelings, British in his aims, British in all his policy and projects. It made no difference whether the lever that was to raise them was fixed at home or abroad, for he was always and equally British. The influence, the grandeur, the dominion of Britain were the dream of his boyhood; to establish them all over the globe, even in the remote region where the waters of Colombia flow in solitude, formed the intense efforts of his riper years. For this he valued power, and for this he used it. Greece he left to her melancholy

fortunes, though so much alive to all the touching recollections and beauties of that devoted land, because the question of her escape from a thraldom so long, so bitter, and so unchristian, was a Turkish and European, not a British question. For Britain's sake *exclusively* he took the determination to counteract France and the continent in Spanish America. So, for Britain's sake, he invariably watched, and was as invariably for counteracting, the United States. He had sagacity to see into the present and latent resources of our commercial, our navigating, our manufacturing strength. Upon the knowledge of these, actual and prospective, he took his measures; and if we may or do think that they were not always wisely taken, since true liberality in the intercourse of nations is in the end apt to prove true wisdom, still he took them in a spirit that was British.

"Those who knew this highly gifted man more nearly testify, that his intercourse in the relations of private and social life was as attractive as his public career was brilliant and commanding. That it has been as brief as brilliant does but recal the pathetic exclamation of Burke, 'What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!'—He ascended to the pinnacle of all his earthly ambition only to die!"

THE END.

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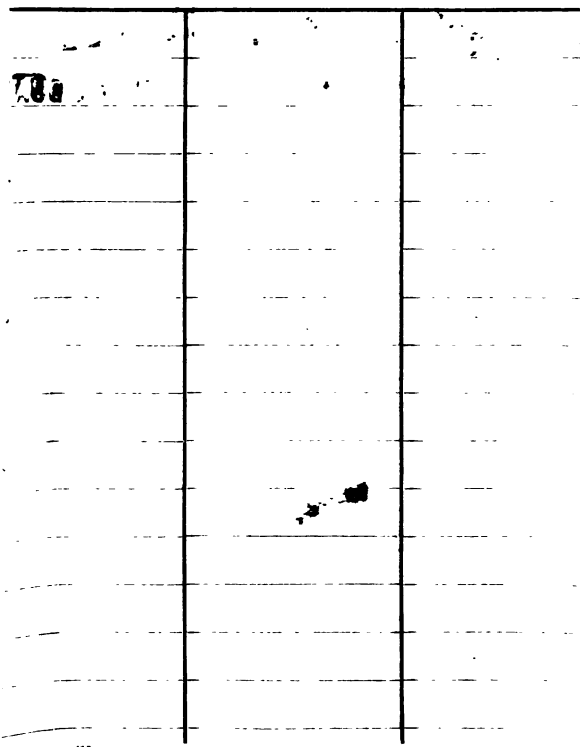
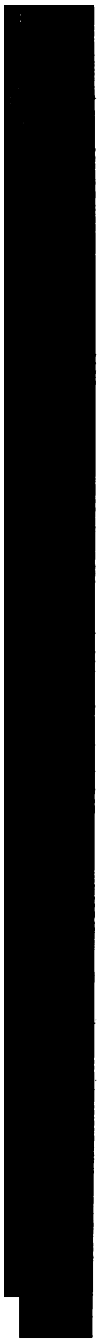
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